I TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

WAI 2700
WAI 3003

KEI RARO I TE MANA O	te ture o te Tiriti o Waitangi 1975
I TE TAKE O	te pakirehua Wai 2700 mō ngā kerēme e pā ana ki te Mana o te Wahine
Ā	
I TE TAKE O	tētahi kerēme nā Nora Rameka, rātou ko Rukuwai Allen ko Heeni Brown (Wai 3003)

Kōrero Taunaki a Arohanui Allen
I tēnei rā, i te 17 o Pepuere 2026

RECEIVED
Waitangi Tribunal
18 Feb 26
Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

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She is Me, I Am Her

Once, before the silence,
before the forgetting,
we knew the truth:
Women bled before war parties
not in weakness, but in sacred protection,
Such was her power,
an offering too holy for the common tongue.
Too raw, too fierce,
too full of life to be bought or sold.
So they silenced the story.
Buried it beneath shame, embarrassment and inferiority.

They called my body crude, my power inconvenient.
They could not own what they could not understand.
So they named me Dusky Maiden
a lie wrapped in hunger,
a pretty name for their theft.
They said I was for sale. And so was my land.

In my native tongue,
we have only one word for both earth and placenta: whenua.
The first land each of us ever knew.
I am her.
She is me.

The red of Papa, Kurawaka
the sacred vulva from which the first human was shaped,
stained once again with the blood of wāhine,
blood not of death, but of creation, of power, of life.
Blood that echoes ancient beginnings. Blood that blesses the soil still.
Sacred.

They tore that knowing from our hands.
The Great Chain of Being
their story, not ours
hung me at the bottom,
beside my rivers, my mountains, my soil,
as if sacredness could ever be ranked,
as if earth could ever be second to sky.
And so they stripped me
of my stories, of my standing, of my sacredness
so they could carve and sell what was never theirs.

But listen now — I remember.
I remember ūkaipō — the night-feeding breast,
that sacred draw back to the mother, to nourishment, to knowing,
to the place where spirit and body meet.
In life, it is the warm body of our mothers.
In death, the embrace of Papatūānuku, eternal mother,
to whom we all return.

I will tell the stories again.
I will lift the songs from the soil,
I will breathe the old names into the winds.
I will sing the sacredness back into our veins.
I will honour the blood that protected nations.
I will honour the whenua that birthed me.
I will honour the maternal power that shapes worlds.
She is me.
I am her.

We are the waka that conveys the generations.

(A Allen, 2025)

TĒNĀ, E TE TARAIPIUNARA

1. Ko taku ingoa ko Arohanui Allen. I provide this brief of evidence in support of a claim by Nora Rameka, Rukuwai Allen and Heeni Brown (Wai 3003) (**"the Claimants"**).

2. My evidence addresses all three issues within the Tribunal's Statement of Issues for this Rangatiratanga Pou,[1] using īkura as an example of wāhine Māori constitutional power and the way in which colonisation and the Crown's actions, or inactions, have actively moved to dismantle this form of wāhine Māori sovereignty.

3. The poem I opened with is one I wrote about this kaupapa – called She is Me, I am Her – it is about Īkura as constitutional power and the deliberate dismantling of wāhine Māori.

4. In preparing this kōrero, I acknowledge with deep respect the pioneering scholars who brought mātauranga relating to īkura into the academic sphere, helping make this knowledge more accessible for wāhine Māori like myself to reclaim and articulate our stories. I am especially indebted to the work of Ani Mikaere, Annette Sykes, Ngāhuia Murphy, Leonie Pihama, Kathie Irwin, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and others whose scholarship has directly informed and supported this contribution.

5. I have structured my evidence to outline:

   (a) Ko wai ahau me ōku wheako;

   (b) Īkura as Constitutional Power;

   (c) The Crown's deliberate attempts to dismantle our innate power;

[1] Wai 2700, #1.4.004 – *Tribunal Statement of Issues for the Rangatiratanga Pou* (4 November 2025).

(d) Te huarahi anga whakamua – returning to our embodiment of te ira wahine.

KO WAI AHAU ME ŌKU WHEAKO

6. He uri heke iho i ngā kāwai rangatira o ngā tūpuna o Ngāpuhi. Kua whārikihia kētia e taku teina, a Rukuwai, ō māua kāwai whakapapa me tō māua whānau. E tautoko mārika ana i āna kōrero katoa.

7. I am an elected councillor for the Far North District Council, representing the Ngā Tai o Tokerau Māori Ward. I have held this role since 2025. My role there includes representation on several committees and community boards, such as:

(a) Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board;

(b) Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board;

(c) Te Kuaka Committee for Māori Strategic Relationships;

(d) Te Koukou Committee for Transport & Infrastructure; and

(e) I also chair the Kōkako – Youth Education & Leadership Pathways portfolio.

8. My background experience is primarily in the education sector, especially within rūmaki and bilingual learning environments. I have held various teaching and leadership roles over the years.

9. My primary role is being a mum to my three children — Aramia (17 years), Ihaka (10 years), and Te Hau Āwhio (1 year).

ĪKURA AS CONSTITUTIONA POWER

10. Īkura, awa atua, becomes my explicit example of our innate power because it is the most tangible proof that wahine sovereignty is embodied.

11. The thing that differs men from women is our bleeding, lactating, reproductive bodies;[2] and it is precisely these bodies that kept our people alive through war, disease, land theft, and assimilation. The menstrual cycle and the ability to give birth saved us from extinction. That is not a metaphor. It is demographic reality, genealogical continuity, and constitutional endurance.

12. Before colonisation, menstrual blood was understood as tapu not because it was contaminating, but because it was potent. It was life-generating. It was spiritually charged. It could restore courage to warriors. It could protect before battle. It was life insurance carried into war. The reproductive body was central to survival and governance.

13. An example of indigenous metaphysics that conceptualise menstrual blood, and women, as a medium of direct contact to atua is the rite of wrapping a soiled apron around the head of a warrior who has lost his nerve, sight, or courage, in order to restore mental power, vigour, and bravery. In this way, carrying a 'soiled apron' into battle functioned as a form of spiritual protection or 'life insurance'.

14. In my poem I said, *"women bled before war parties, not in weakness, but in sacred protection"* and *"so they silenced the story, buried it beneath shame, embarrassment and inferiority"*. Here, I'm talking about the fact that equating menstrual restrictions with female inferiority has been a powerful vehicle for forwarding colonialist discourses of male supremacy and female subordination.

15. What is consistently downplayed across the colonial ethnographic literature is the significance of the location of Kurawaka at the vulva of Papatūānuku and the force inherent within the 'red soil' that made Hineahuone's creation finally achievable. Tāne is singularly celebrated

[2] Ngahuia Murphy, "Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine: An examination of stories, ceremonies and practices regarding menstruation in the pre-colonial Māori world" (*Thesis, Master of Arts (MA) University of Waikato,* 2011) ('**Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine'**) at p 21.

for his act of procreation denying the raw, and very female, sexual potency imbued in the 'red soil'.

16. Similarly, reference to Te Ūkaipō, a beloved name for Papatūānuku, refers to the pre-dawn breastfeeding hours when a mother provides her baby physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual nourishment and sustenance through the milk. The use of the term in relation to Papatūānuku speaks to the divinity of the earth in its capacity to nurture and fulfil all the basic needs of humanity.

17. In 1856, Dr Isaac Featherston stated, "The Māori are dying out, and nothing can save them. Our plain duty, as good compassionate colonists, is to smooth down their dying pillow. Then history will have nothing to reproach us with."[3] Extinction was assumed. Disappearance was anticipated. Yet we did not disappear. We survived because women continued to bleed, to conceive, to carry, and to birth despite disease, land theft, and assimilation. If wāhine had stopped birthing, that prophecy would have come true. Our bodies contradicted his certainty. Our bodies ensured it did not. Such is our power. And that power had to be dismantled.

18. Our stories of decimation and survival are written in the fertile blood of Māori women.[4]

CROWN'S DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO DISMANTLE OUR POWER

19. The stripping of īkura from sacred protection to shame was not incidental. It began in the reordering of knowledge. Early colonial ethnographers reframed Māori cosmology through European hierarchies. Menstrual tapu was translated through biblical notions of impurity. Sacred potency became contamination. Knowledge about wāhine bodies was altered, softened, or buried. Language narrowed.

[3] Te Rangi Hiroa (PH Buck) "The Passing of the Māori" (1924) 55 Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand at 362.
[4] Ngahuia Murphy, *Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine,* at p 14.

Tara became "mea." Sacred vocabulary shrank into silence. The deliberate recoding of īkura from sacred to suspect weakened not only women but the constitutional fabric of our society.

20. This was not neutral scholarship. It was narrative control. The power to control stories about ourselves is the power to control our own lives: "The one who tells the stories rules the world."[5] When reproductive authority is rewritten as shame, the groundwork for structural diminishment is laid. The political agenda behind the historic construction of menstruation as pollutive commences.

21. Presenting menstruation as a source of contamination has been a key element of colonialist ethnographic reports that proclaim the inferior status of women in traditional Māori society.[6] Menstruation has been portrayed as demonic in some colonial ethnographic literature.[7]

22. Knowledge that was seen as too graphic, too extraordinary, or that challenged colonial ideologies, particularly in relation to women, was changed or simply omitted by some male ethnographers.[8]

23. Nowhere else is this misogynist lens more glaringly apparent, I argue, than in colonial ethnographic representations of 'traditional' Māori menstrual narratives.

24. Dualist ideologies, created and maintained to perpetuate white male hegemony, provided the lens through which the colonial historians and

[5] P Allen *Spider woman's granddaughters: Traditional tales and contemporary writings by Native American women* (Beacon Press, Boston 1989) at 27.
[6] Elsdon Best "Māori Medical Lore" (1904) 13 The Journal of the Polynesian Society at 213-237; Elsdon Best *The Māori as he was* (Government Printer, Wellington,1924a); W.H Goldie *Māori Medical Lore* (Southern reprints, New Zealand, 1904).
[7] Elsdon Best *The Māori as he was* (Government Printer, Wellington,1924a); W.H Goldie *Māori Medical Lore* (Southern reprints, New Zealand, 1904); E Shortland, *Māori Religion and Mythology* (Longman & Green, London, 1882).
[8] Aroha Yates-Smith "Hine! E Hine! Rediscovering the feminine in Māori spirituality" (University of Waikato, 1998) at 114.

ethnographers reinterpreted the Māori world.[9] Repeatedly, ethnographic records classify Māori women as inferior within western frameworks of hierarchy, describing them as "daughters of the earth,"[10] referenced in my poem with the following, '*hung me at the bottom, beside my rivers, my mountains, my soil, as if sacredness could ever be ranked'.*

25. Where Western dualistic frameworks interpret the linking of women with nature or earth as an essentialist idea that reinforces control and hierarchy, Māori cultural and spiritual traditions understand this connection as whakapapa to atua wāhine, whose narratives stand in opposition to ideas of impurity or pollution or inferiority.

26. While narratives aligning wahine with nature and whenua is widely known, narratives of wahine Māori as fierce fighters, strategists, leaders and protectors are not widely known. My role as kaikaranga, my ability to open realms and provide space for our mate to be with our hunga ora has been silenced for generations and is only just being reclaimed. The inherent contradiction in accepting menstruation as 'unclean' within a culture that celebrates whakapapa.[11]

27. Parallel examples of sweeping censorship can be found in colonial ethnographer Edward Shortland's work where he translates his findings on menstruation into Latin and relegates it into appendices.[12] This example reflects the politics of knowledge production that perpetuates colonial patriarchy by marginalising women's realities. Women's knowledge is reduced to a trace in the literary landscape, contributing to a lack of knowledge that impacts on Māori women today.

28. The infiltration of Christian ideologies can be clearly identified in the

[9] Leonie Pihama "Redrawing the maps the plural society and its futures" (Te Pua 3.2, 1994a), at 37-41; Leonie Pihama "Tihei mauri ora: Honouring our voices: Mana wahine as a kaupapa Māori theoretical framework" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Auckland 2001) at 261.
[10] Ngahuia Murphy, *Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine,* at p 22.
[11] At 191-192.
[12] E Shortland *Traditions and superstitions of the New Zealanders* (William Brendon, London, 1856); E Shortland, *Māori Religion and Mythology* (Longman & Green, London, 1882).

work of Elsdon Best who, in relation to the reproductive body of Māori women, translates tapu (which in all other contexts he translates as sacred or restricted) as a state paralleling "the condition termed 'unclean' in the Scriptures".[13] Thus, Best presumes to design a whole new 'kind' of tapu for women, one that is in line with Christian doctrine and one that denies the power and significance of Māori women's reproductive bodies as te whare tangata - the sacred house of humanity.[14]

29. The (mis)representations and (mis)interpretations of those early ethnographers have become the foundations of what many Māori assume are traditional values and beliefs.

30. Native women's bodies in particular "stand in the way of the continuing conquest of Native lands, endangering the continued success of colonization"[15] because by giving birth they ensure the continuity of the people. As such they are "bearers of a counter-imperial order and pose a supreme threat to the dominant culture".[16]

31. Clarissa Pinkola-Estes writes that presenting menstruation as a shameful and humiliating 'punishment of God' caused women to lose "their inheritance of the miraculous body",[17] and broke matrilineal traditions of "teaching, preparing, and welcoming their daughters into the most basic and physical aspect of being a woman".[18]

32. Masculinist Christian traditions use heavenly holy water, blessed by male priests under the power of a male god to banish evil forces and purify.

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[13] Elsdon Best *The Māori as he was* (Government Printer, Wellington,1924a) at 107; Elsdon Best *The Whare Kohanga and its lore: Comprising data pertaining to procreation, baptism and infant betrothal* (Government Printer, 1929) at 7.
[14] See Ngahuia Murphy, *Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine,* at p 49 referring to personal communication with her aunty Rose Pere on 10 July 2010.
[15] Andrea Smith *Conquest: sexual violence and American Indian genocide* (South End Press, Cambridge, 2005) at 79.
[16] At 15.
[17] Clarissa Pinkola-Estes *Women who run with wolves: Contacting the power of the wild woman* (Rider, London, 1992) at 435.
[18] At 435.

Here the purificatory water is a woman's menstrual blood. This difference provides a striking testament to the philosophical chasm between colonial cultural ideologies and Indigenous philosophies. If our tīpuna saw menstruation as a powerful protective force that held the capacity to purify and shield against malignant energies, what does this communicate to us about Māori constructs of womanhood in former times?

33. Here at the genesis of humanity in what could be a story reflecting the intense power of women, sourced from the creative force of the earth, we find a subdued story of female reticence. Translated in such a way, this story became the hook upon which to hang chronicles of masculine supremacy within the Māori world that continue today.

34. Cowan's example, "Tane the god created the first woman out of earth; he formed her by scraping up the earth into human shape and endowed her with life. He lay on her and breathed life into her and he called her Hine-hau-one … he took her to wife"[19] like many, employs a language embedded in the sexual power politics of conquest. "He took her to wife"[20] reflects colonialist, Victorian, and patriarchal attitudes of domination and control. It illustrates the Victorian ideologies of the time about women being the property of men.

Legislation that Suppresses Wāhine Māori Rangatiratanga

35. That epistemic shift moved into legislative design – deliberate action led by the Crown and its agents.

36. English common law was imported into this country through the English Laws Act 1858, embedding the doctrine of coverture. Under coverture, a married woman had no independent legal identity; her existence was subsumed under her husband. Authority was filtered through male

[19] J Cowan, *Legends of the Māori* (Vol 1, Harry H. Tombs, Wellington 1930) at 8.
[20] At 8.

standing.[21] This is the intellectual foundation for the idea that women were treated as property or chattels.

37. The New Zealand Constitution Act 1852 established a representative government while excluding women from political participation. The constitutional framework of the colony was male at its foundation.

38. The Native Land Acts of 1862 and 1865 converted collective Māori land tenure into individualised title through the Native Land Court. Authority had to appear in Crown-recognised forms. Named individuals were recorded. Evidence was structured through British legal norms. Male leadership models were privileged.

39. Crown legislature and system did not need to declare women inferior; it produced that outcome through process and design. Using Native Lands held by wāhine Māori as an example, the system's architecture produced concentration of authority in male hands. Erosion of wāhine rangatira land influence. Reduced intergenerational land security for Māori women.

40. The Education Ordinance 1847 further entrenched this hierarchy by designing Māori education along rigid gendered lines: boys were to be trained in agriculture and manual labour, while girls were instructed in domestic service and homemaking. This was not neutral curriculum. It was legislative social engineering. It narrowed girls' futures to domesticity and reinforced the notion that women belonged in the private sphere while men operated in economic and public domains. Education became another structural mechanism through which hierarchy was normalised and reproduced.

41. The Married Women's Property Act 1884 later granted married women legal control over property, confirming that such autonomy had been constrained.

[21] William Blackstone *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1765–1769).

42. The Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 attacked Māori spiritual authority, undermining domains where wāhine held influence.

43. None of these statutes needed to say "women are lesser." The structure of governance, property law, and representation embedded that hierarchy without ever naming it.

44. The stripping of awa atua from sacred protection to pollutive danger parallels the stripping of whenua from collective, relational, often intergenerationally balanced authority to alienable individual title. Whenua means placenta and land. The same word binds body and territory. When land was recoded into property, and women were recoded into dependents, the constitutional order shifted. The erosion of wahine authority in decision-making, including land governance, was not separate from the erosion of menstrual sanctity. Both were aspects of a broader restructuring of power.

How Power was Redefined

45. Elsdon Best, always consistently reliable in his regurgitations of patriarchal discourse, writes: This 'house' of misfortune, of ominous inferiority, is represented by this world, by the earth, by the female sex, and by the female organ of generation, which holds dread powers of destruction and pollution.[22]

46. Binaries, such as dualism, place menstrual blood within a misogynist paradigm of female inferiority.

47. Matrilineal knowledges in cultural practices and their deeper meanings have been obscured by masculinist, colonialist interpretations that have perpetuated a patriarchal agenda.

48. Kathie Irwin notes that while 'tikanga' has evolved to accommodate Pākehā men speaking on the marae, the same cannot be said for Māori

[22] Elsdon Best *The Māori as he was* (Government Printer, Wellington,1924a) at p 74.

women whose tikanga roles seem to have "petrified, like a slab of rock" amidst the whirl of rapid change.[23] I not only see that petrification, I have experienced it first-hand. So too has my sister Rukuwai who speaks to it in her evidence. What is presented as timeless often reflects colonial freezing. Roles attributed to wāhine are often presented as timeless and unmovable, even as everything else shifts around them.

49. Māori women's knowledge has been systematically subordinated to Māori men's knowledge, while their roles have been recast through colonial gender assumptions. Accounts relating to Māori women have often been erased, distorted, or reframed to serve colonial belief systems.[24]

50. I also stand with Leonie Pihama in her assertion that "I am under no doubt that much of what is expressed today as the role of Māori women is directly linked to notions of social control and power".[25] I have felt that control.

51. I have been told: "You're a mother. You have a family you know. You should be at home raising the children." That statement was not about honouring motherhood; it was about defining my limits. My reproductive capacity was invoked to confine my authority.

52. Receiving of moko kauae after the first bleeding was a huge honour for whānau and celebration would almost always follow. Many kūia have spoken about having their moko kauae after this time.

53. When I received my moko kauae, I did it knowing the disproval of many men in my family. It was not seen as my right, but as something I had to somehow earn, as a defile of my body because of the scriptures that

[23] Kathie Irwin *Becoming an academic: Contradictions and dilemmas of a Māori feminist (*In S.J. Middleton, A. (Ed.), Women and education in Aotearoa, Bridget Williams Books Ltd, Wellington, 1992b), at p12.
[24] Leonie Pihama "Redrawing the maps the plural society and its futures" (Te Pua 3.2, 1994a), at 39.
[25] Leonie Pihama "Tihei mauri ora: Honouring our voices: Mana wahine as a kaupapa Māori theoretical framework" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Auckland 2001) at p 261.

markings were unholy, and it came with many rules. I was told explicitly: I could not smoke, I could not perform oral sex. I carried ancestral whakapapa visibly on my face. Yet my behaviour was policed.

54. These conditions were framed not through tikanga but through scriptural morality layered onto my body. My face became a site of regulation. The ancestral became moralised. The cosmological became conditional. This is not an isolated experience; it reflects the long shadow of imposed purity codes that have recast wāhine bodies as spaces requiring discipline. Receiving my moko kauae has been an act of resistance and reclamation, instead of a rite to be celebrated.

55. These structural shifts filtered into social practice and internalised belief. I was raised to believe that as a wahine I stand at the front during pōhiri when coming on to a marae because I require protection. Yet our kōrero tells us something else: we protect each other. Yes, men protect physically, but I protect physically and spiritually. Protection is reciprocal.

56. The reinterpretation of wāhine as needing protection, rather than exercising it, reflects colonial gender hierarchies embedded within tikanga as practised. When protector becomes protected, constitutional standing subtly shifts.

57. Even our taiao reflected shared roles. The male kiwi nested while the female hunted. This was used as metaphor for men actively caring for children from childbirth onwards. Our ancestors modelled balance through nature to establish archetypes for healthy social and whānau relationships.[26] Today, however, women's reproductive bodies are often treated as workforce liabilities, time off for menstruation, pregnancy, or caregiving is framed as inconvenience rather than contribution.

58. The same body that stopped extinction is treated as economic disruption. This is not coincidence. It is systemic inheritance.

[26] Ngahuia Murphy, *Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine,* at p 62.

59. Today Māori women face disproportionate rates of violence, incarceration, poverty, health inequity, and underrepresentation in governance. These outcomes are not accidental. They are the predictable results of a system that never needed to explicitly declare women inferior because it embedded inferiority through architecture. Through constitutional exclusion, property law, court processes, and governance design, Crown legislation and its systems structured outcomes that marginalised us while maintaining the appearance of neutrality.

60. All of this to say what we already know. Equating menstrual restrictions with female inferiority has been a powerful vehicle for forwarding colonialist discourses of male supremacy and female subordination. Our wisdom and knowledge as Māori women has been silenced by the patriarchal nature of colonisation and continues to be marginalised within the current political climate in both the Pākehā (non-Māori) and Māori world.[27]

61. Until we address this issue at a fundamental level, tino rangatiratanga will remain elusive. Ngahuia Murphy maintains that menstrual blood represent power, not pollution, and discourses of pollution seek to progress a colonialist patriarchal agenda that cuts across the politics of tino rangatiratanga.[28]

62. That is how systemic power operates.

63. Like Crown legislation itself, no one says directly, "this is happening because you are a woman." Instead, it shows up in behaviour, in

[27] See as examples, Kathie Irwin *Becoming an academic: Contradictions and dilemmas of a Māori feminist (*In S.J. Middleton, A. (Ed.), Women and education in Aotearoa, Bridget Williams Books Ltd, Wellington, 1992b); Ani Mikaere *The balance destroyed: The consequences for Māori women of the colonisation of tikanga Māori* (The International Research Institute for Māori and Indigenous Education, Auckland, 2003); Annette Sykes "The politics of the brown table" *(*Paper presented at the Bruce Jesson Memorial Lecture, University of Auckland, 2010);
Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, *Mana wahine Māori: Selected writings on Mōari women's art, culture, and politics* (New Womens Press, Auckland, 1991); Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (1992). "He whiriwhiri wahine: Framing women's studies for Aotearoa" *(*Te Pua, 1.1, 1992) at 46-58.
[28] Ngahuia Murphy, *Te Awa Atua, Te Awa Tapu, Te Awa Wahine,* at p 5.

expectations, in who is believed, who is chosen, who is advanced, who is protected and who is overlooked. It is the outcome of internalised colonialism.

64. I have repeatedly observed that men are more likely to be shortlisted, selected, or advanced for roles that wāhine are equally, and sometimes better equipped to perform. That is not accidental. It reflects a design about who is seen as belonging in the public and decision-making domain, and who is not.

65. As a mother, I take deliberate care to prepare my daughter for the realities of misogyny, present within both Māori and non-Māori spaces, because I know the system she is growing into was not designed with her wellbeing or authority at the centre. I take that responsibility seriously. I want her to be aware without being diminished, prepared without being hardened, and proud without being silenced.

66. Many of my everyday actions as a wahine Māori are acts of resistance, acts of remembering, reclaiming, and refusing diminishment. But this is not the inheritance I want for my daughter or for my future mokopuna. I do not want their lives to be defined by constant resistance and recovery work. I want them to inherit a world where their authority, their bodies, their knowledge, and their leadership are normalised.

TE HUARAHI ANGA WHAKAMUA

67. Making intentional space for Māori women within theory is not an academic nice-to-have. It is a necessary and practical lever for change, given the troubling statistics that continue to reflect the pressures and inequities Māori women experience. This is the purpose of my kauhau to the Tribunal. It exposes design where others see accident. It restores constitutional balance where imbalance has been normalised.

68. Reclaiming īkura as sacred power is not symbolic work. It is structural repair. Our bleeding did not weaken us. It stopped extinction.

69. Our bodies were never the problem. They were the constitutional foundation of survival.

70. Retrieving pre-colonial menstrual philosophies in the hope that this may facilitate an uprooting of damaging menstrual discourses that have embedded themselves into Māori spaces.

71. Returning to our embodiment of te ira wahine is empowering for all, it should not be feared.

72. Until Crown systems reflect that truth, until governance structures are reconfigured rather than cosmetically adjusted, tino rangatiratanga remains incomplete. Constitutional reform is needed, grounded in Te Tiriti and tikanga-based knowledge systems that restores balance between wāhine Māori and men.

73. I seek that the Tribunal recommend the Crown adopt a positive duty to support the restoration, protection, and transmission of mātauranga wāhine, including knowledge relating to īkura, through:

    (a) kaupapa Māori research funding;

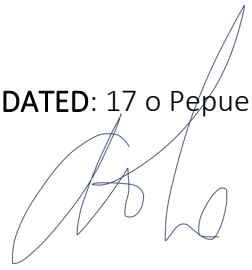
    (b) wāhine Māori-led knowledge initiatives;

    (c) protection of tikanga knowledge holders; and

    (d) intergenerational transmission programmes.

74. Kāti rā aku mihi nui ki a koutou, kei te Taraipiunara. Kua tau!

DATED: 17 o Pepuere 2026



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Arohanui Allen