BEFORE THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI 3553
WAI 3503

IN THE MATTER OF	the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	the Education and Training Amendment Act and Te Mātaiaho Urgent Inquiry **(WAI 3553)**
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	a claim by **Watson Ohia, Heywood Kuka, me Sophie** Tukukino for and on behalf of **Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa (Wai 3502)**

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF JOHN RANGITEREMAURI HEREMIA

Dated on this 24th day of March 2026

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E TE TARAIPIUNARA

"Kotahi te kōwhao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro mā, te miro pango, te miro whero"

There is but one eye of the needle, through which the white, black, and red threads must pass.

- Kiingi Pōtatau Te Wherowhero –

(This whakatauākī is not merely a symbol of unity — it is a pedagogical instruction. Every ākonga at the kura, regardless of whakapapa or background, passes through the same eye. The kura does not produce Māori children who succeed at the expense of others. It produces uri who carry the collective.)

Introduction

1. My name is John Heremia. I affiliate to Ngai Tūhoe and was born and raised in Rūātoki. He hunaona hoki ahau nō roto mai o Waikato. Nō Ngāti Māhuta raua ko Ngāti Whawhakia tōku hoa rangatira.

2. I provide this brief of evidence in support of Wai 3502 Ngā Kura ā Iwi, in their application for urgency into the Education and Training Amendment Act 2025 and the reset of the New Zealand Curriculum – Te Mātaiaho (Wai 3553).

3. I am currently the Principal of Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga, a position I have held for 37 years since 1989, and a teacher at the kura some ten years before then.

Background to Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga

4. Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga was established as a native primary school under the Native Schools Act on 21 September 1896 at a time when Māori were required to donate the land for the schools before communities would receive support from the Government to set up a school.

5. In 1969, Rakaumanga was integrated into the state system under the control of the Hamilton Education Board with the abolition of Native Schools. It was one of the last Native Schools to be redesignated.

6. In 1974, the school was relocated after the threat of the Huntly Power Station, and fierce lobbying by the local community prevented its closure and eventually the school was relocated to its present site at 26 McDiarmid Crescent, Huntly West. That fight was led by Māori Queen Te Atairangikaahu and her brother Sir Robert Mahuta and it prevented its planned closure to make way for the construction of the Huntly Power Station.

7. I arrived at the kura not long after its relocation. This was the period of national Māori resistance and renaissance. The line in the sand. The moment Māori declared, *'I do not want to be someone else! I am Māori. I want to be Māori. I want to be successful as a Maori'*. This was refined within our community as *'I am a Waikato Tainui Māori. I want to be a Waikato Tainui Maori. I want to be successful as a Waikato Tainui Māori.'*

8. Following its relocation, Rakaumanga became a bilingual school in 1984. Disappointment with the depth and speed of te reo Maori acquisition amongst the students resulted in the kura introducing Total Immersion instruction in te reo Maori across all subjects in 1986 and by 1992 all classes (NE to F2) were taught totally in te reo Maori.

9. The kura retained it's form 3 (Year 9) students in 1993 and established a secondary unit on the kura site. Ministerial approval to redesignate as a Special Character Composite School (Wharekura) was received in 1996 officially sanctioning the establishment of a teaching and learning environment for Year 1 to Year 15 students on the one school site. The first cohort of Year 13 students graduated from the Wharekura in 1997.

10. In 1986, Rakaumanga became a kura and the kura achieved official redesignation as a Total Immersion Māori co-educational composite (Years 1–15) Tribal Wharekura on 1 January 1995.

11. In 1996, Ministerial approval to redesignate as a Special Character Composite School was received, officially sanctioning the establishment of a secondary school programme teaching Year 1 to Year 13 students on one school site. The first cohort of Year 13 students graduated from the Wharekura in 1997. Many of those first tauira of 1997, are now Kaiako in the kura and the backbone and product of our school's legacy.

12. For 29 years we have watched our graduates enter into meaningful careers and livelihoods. Strong and articulate in their identity as Maori and active and articulate participants in wider society, nationally and globally.

13. Our Wharekura Charter states, 'The learning and teaching environment that Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga provides is a Waikato Tainui initiative in support of the Crown's commitment to equitable educational outcomes for Maori.' It further states, 'Te Runanga o Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga will ensure that all children are provided with an education which respects their Tino Rangatiratanga (their dignity, rights and

uniqueness as Maori) and that all Wharekura activities will be designed to advance these purposes.'

14. Our kura currently enrols 400 ākonga from Years 1 to 13. While Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga primarily caters for the learning needs of students from its traditional catchment areas of Waahi Pa, Rakaumangamanga, Te Kauri Pa, Kaitumu Pa and Te Ohaki Pa, it also meets the needs of students from other areas of Waikato Tainui and Aotearoa. In particular, from communities that have Kura Kaupapa Maori Y1-Y8 kura but no Wharekura in close proximity for their students to graduate to.

15. As noted earlier in my statement, Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga will be commemorating 130 years of existence as a government-sanctioned place of learning. The community in 1896 embraced the promise of a better quality of life for their children with the opening of Rakaumanga Native School. They did not realise that the price determined by the government for that privilege was to denounce their cultural identity, their Tino Rangatiratanga, their dignity, rights and uniqueness as Māori.

16. My early years of education was undertaken while this sentiment was still very prevalent. Speaking Maori at school was prohibited and we were punished severely if caught. We all knew the words to the national anthem and stood at attention each morning in class to sing it. All classrooms were festooned with pictures and maps of the Commonwealth countries and famous people from England. We were taught about the amazing achievements and exploits of the kings and queens of England, of Richard the Lion Heart and King Henry the Eight, of the amazing hero's of the people, Robin Hood and Lord Nelson and other white people. We learnt to read in English using the illustrations of pakeha children and their families to help us read. (The only darkie person in a book was a story about Black Sambo.) We were given certificates for being good readers, writers and speakers of English. Our parents were invited to the awards ceremony.

17. Our face, our story, was relegated as an appendage to the arts and crafts curriculum and/or the music and dance curriculum. Our formative learning years were strictly prescribed and enforced. You began to despise the colour of your skin, the way you lived, because you wanted to look and live like the people you read about and the school as a whole celebrated. You so wanted to be more pakeha.

18. Our kura is based in Rāhui Pōkeka, Huntly, and community-driven, community lead. No decisions are made without the full approval of the local community and hapū. We support all Kiingitanga events, tangihanga and hui and our students uphold the values of manaakitanga and kōtahitanga by always assisting both in the back of the marae, and waiata tautoko on the paepae where needed. Our ākonga getting their grounding by practising these values in person, and not just learning from books. *Sound familiar?* This is what this current government and its policies are seeking to return us to.

19. I have serious concerns about the mandatory guardrails that the Waitangi Tribunal secured for Kaupapa Maori Education within the Education Act, as a Tiriti o Waitangi obligation. This concern arises alongside recent public commentary by Members of Parliament questioning the place and status of Te Tiriti, guidance to school boards indicating that its inclusion in school Charters are no longer compulsory but instead left to the discretion of individual boards and their communities, the removal of Maori texts from school readers and from referring to some national school programmes with their Maori title.

20. The existing New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (the Māori medium curriculum equivalent) provided explicit commitments to te reo Māori as a taonga protected under Te Tiriti. Under the current framework, schools are required to recognise and provide for te reo Māori in meaningful ways.

21. This shift introduces a level of interference, discretion and avoidance that undermines the recommendations of the Tribunal, the mana of Te Tiriti, and the obligation of government agencies to give full effect to its intent.

22. Prior to the Crown's disturbing assault on Te Tiriti, its unfiltered intent provided us with the authorised space to explore alternative educational programmes that would enable Maori students to enjoy similar growth and success as their treaty partners have since 1896. It legitimised our right to pursue that, even though the Ministry of Education didn't know how it would benefit Maori students.

23. Our charter makes it explicit that our Wharekura goals must support the advancement of the tribal aspirations for Waikato Tainui, so it must not be out of sync with the tribe's kaupapa also. This is what a Treaty partnership should look like.

24. This is the reason I have chosen to give evidence in this Inquiry, because I believe the Crown tinkering (raweke) with Te Tiriti negatively affects our Wharekura Charter Vision and Purpose.

25. The curriculum framework under which we have operated has its foundational importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as structural principles. The proposed changes to Te Mātaiaho represent a material departure from these foundations of our Kura philosophical pedagogy and tribal narratives.

26. If the Crown departs from that partnership, I have to get a mandate from the tribe to articulate the tribe's aspirations to the Crown. I am instructed by the tribe and I take that mandate seriously. Ko te mana motuhake ki a Waikato Tainui i tukuna mai tērā kai raro hoki i te Tiriti. He mokopuna ēnei nā rātou. They want their mokopuna to be successful in all aspects, never to leave behind an area of learning, reading, writing, mathematics.

27. The curriculum framework under which we have operated has its foundational importance of te Tiriti o Waitangi as structural principles. The proposed changes to Te Mātaiaho represent a material departure from these foundations of our Kura philosophical pedagogy and tribal narratives.

The current framework - Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and the NZ Curriculum

28. I have been in this kura for over forty years. I have watched tamariki arrive who could not hear te reo in their own homes, and I have watched those same tamariki graduate fluent, confident, and grounded in who they are, proud to be Māori and contributing to New Zealand society and as a global citizen. That transformation did not happen by accident. It happened because the framework within which we operated gave us the mandate — and the obligation — to put te reo and Te Ao Māori world view at the centre of our education philosophy and curriculum.

29. Our entire pedagogical model not only rests on te reo Māori, the primary medium through which all learning occurs, but it is also the medium through which everything else is taught. More than that, it is the lens through which our ākonga come to understand the world. Underneath the reo sits our Te Ao Māori world view — our values, our principles, our relationships, our tribal histories, making sense of what matters and why. That world view is not a curriculum add-on. It is the foundation from which our entire programme of learning is built.

30. The current framework, for all its imperfections, validates this approach. It tells the world that a kura like ours — built on te reo, shaped by Te Ao Māori world view, guided by the principles, values of Te Kiingitanga — is not an outlier or an experiment. It is exactly what a Treaty-compliant education system looks like in practice. What is now proposed threatens to take that validation away.

31. My evidence addresses Issues (g, h and j)[1] of Her Honour's Directions dated 12 March 2026.

New Zealand Curriculum – Te Mātaiaho, Issues (g, h and j)

(g) In what ways will the proposed curriculum framework and learning areas change the significance of te Tiriti as a foundational or directive principle in schools?

(i) More specifically, in what ways will the proposed curriculum framework and learning areas change the way te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and Aotearoa histories are taught?

(h) Does the timeframe for the public submissions process to provide feedback on the draft curriculum allow for any meaningful change to be implemented in relation to the final curriculum? If not, why not?

(j) What prejudice, if any, arises for Māori as a result of the proposed curriculum changes?

Te Mātaiaho reset

32. Having reviewed the draft Te Mātaiaho curriculum framework and associated learning areas, I have serious concerns that the reset will diminish the explicit centrality of te reo Māori and our te ao Māori worldview.

33. Specifically, I am concerned that:

a. We have never been consulted with, nor engaged with that could be reasonable be described as Treaty-compliant. We were presented with a fait accompli and given a window so narrow it could only have been designed to *prevent* meaningful response.

[1] Wai 3553, #2.5.7(a)

b. The draft curriculum reduces te reo Māori to a 'learning area' rather than maintaining its status as a medium of instruction and a directive principle across all learning.

c. The framing of te reo Māori within the draft is predominantly oriented toward second-language acquisition in mainstream settings, with insufficient recognition of Māori medium environments such as kura kaupapa Māori.

d. The removal of explicit reference to te reo Māori as a taonga in the curriculum's foundational principles weakens the Crown's Tiriti obligations as a matter of educational policy. In fact, the removal of it is tantamount to cultural erasure.

34. In practical terms, this risks de-legitimising immersion-based Māori medium education in the eyes of school boards, the Ministry of Education, and the public. Funding, staffing, and resourcing decisions downstream of curriculum policy frequently depend on what is explicitly named and protected in that policy.

Loss of Tikanga Māori and Mātauranga Māori

35. To me, focus only on te reo Māori is too narrow. It's the Māori world view.

36. At our Kura tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori are not supplementary to learning – they are the epistemological foundation from which all learning proceeds. This is the core commitment of Te Kiingitanga. We are a school of the Kīngitanga. The principles of the movement — **Whakaiti, Whakapono, Aroha, Rangimaarie, Manaakitanga, Kotahitanga, Mahi tahi** — are not values we teach about. They are the values we teach through.

37. The proposed curriculum framework treats mātauranga Māori primarily as a perspective to be 'incorporated' or 'interwoven' into mainstream learning areas, rather than as an independent, equal, and self-sufficient knowledge system.

38. I grew up in an era where more Māori were ashamed to be Māori than people who were proud to be Māori. I grew up in an era where there were Māori who wished they were born Pākeha so they could be part of the commonwealth privilege, and not struggle or be poor. This approach by the Crown has a name in the literature: **cultural reductionism**.

39. I have over 69 years of lived experience in experiencing cultural reductionism first-hand and it was, and still is, alive and real. I don't want to go back to those days of extreme cultural assimilation. I don't want to give the Crown the opportunity to design who we are, and who we are going to be tomorrow. No more.

40. When the Ministry told our Board "you don't have to follow the Treaty" we were dumbfounded. When you dimmish that part, it provides authority to ignore it in another part.

41. At our Kura we have ensured that three generations of whānau have graduated fluent in te reo and English, excel in all areas of pursuit, and walk proud among both worlds, contributing to this nation as well-rounded citizens that te Tiriti envisioned for them. As a kura and educational institution we have a responsibility to our people. *E kore ratou e ngaro.* They should be able to stand and grow as Māori children proud of their tribal history and be competent as citizens to contribute to our society.

42. The proposed curriculum's approach to mātauranga Māori is more sophisticated in its language but structurally identical in its effect: it incorporates without transforming. It acknowledges without obligating. It references without protecting. I am really fearful that if brakes are not put on this reset, our tamariki mokopuna will be set back to the days when I grew up.

43. This approach has concrete consequences for not just our kura:

    a. The removal of explicit Treaty-based obligations to provide for tikanga Māori in schools means that tikanga is no longer a structural requirement. It becomes a recommendation, a preference, a cultural option. Schools that choose not to engage seriously with tikanga are no longer in breach of anything. They are simply making a curriculum choice.

    b. It frames mātauranga Māori as derivative or supplementary to Western knowledge paradigms, rather than as co-equal under the Treaty partnership principle.

    c. It provides insufficient direction to the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Council regarding the resourcing and development of kaiako (teachers) who can deliver mātauranga Māori authentically.

d. It removes the structural obligation on the Crown to ensure mātauranga Māori is protected and transmitted through the education system – an obligation that flows directly from te Tiriti.

e. The shift from compulsory to discretionary engagement means that the resourcing, professional development, and assessment infrastructure that supports mātauranga Māori delivery — which is already inadequate — will no longer be driven by obligation. Where obligation creates demand for resources, aspiration creates silence.

44. The loss of explicit tikanga Māori obligations in the curriculum also creates risk for our ākonga outside of our kura environment. As our rangatahi move through secondary school, transition to tertiary education, and into employment, they carry tikanga Māori as a lived practice. A curriculum that **does not** honour tikanga as substantive, contributes to systemic marginalisation of that knowledge and identity, and impacts on their ability to become global citizens, and contribute to the fabric of New Zealand's society that was intended by our tīpuna under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

45. The Ministry of Education's response to criticism of these changes, which has been to say that te reo Māori and Te Ao Māori are *'woven throughout'* the draft curriculum. I have heard this phrase many times across forty years in this sector. It is the language used to justify the inclusion of Māori culture as decoration rather than foundation. Something that is woven through a fabric is not the fabric. At our kura, mātauranga Māori is not woven through the curriculum. It is the loom.

Aotearoa histories and herstories

46. Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories became compulsory in all schools in 2023. I want to name clearly what that meant, because it is easy to lose sight of it in the technical language of curriculum frameworks. For the first time in the history of this country's education system, every child — not just the children in kura like ours — was required to learn the history of this land. The New Zealand Wars. Confiscations. Te Tiriti. The history of how Māori land was taken, how Māori language was suppressed, and how the community that surrounds this kura came to be the way they are today.

47. That was not a gift from the Crown. It was won. It was won by students from Ōtorohanga College who collected ten thousand signatures demanding that the wars

that shaped their rohe be taught truthfully. It was won by decades of advocacy from iwi, educators, and communities who were tired of their children learning more about Robin Hood than Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, the first Māori King. I say that from personal experience — that was my own schooling in Rūātoki. I knew more about King Arthur than I knew about King Tāwhiao. The Aotearoa New Zealand Histories curriculum was the beginning of the corrective.

48. The recent introduction of Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories as a mandatory curriculum area was a significant and welcome development. It created an obligation for all schools – not only kura kaupapa Māori – to engage with the authentic histories of Aotearoa, including colonisation, raupatu: land confiscation, and the ongoing impacts of the Treaty relationship.

49. Associate Education Minister David Seymour celebrated the removal of what he called 'Marxist big ideas,' including that 'the course of Aotearoa New Zealand's histories has been shaped by the use of power.' I want to respond to that characterisation directly, as someone who has lived this history and who has been at this kura for forty years. The confiscations that stripped Waikato Tainui of their land under the Public Works Act were not a political opinion. The fact that this very school was nearly demolished to make way for a power station, and that it was saved only through the intervention of Māori Queen Te Atairangikaahu and her brother Sir Robert Mahuta, is not a Marxist big idea. It is what happened. The power that shaped those events was real. A curriculum that is not permitted to name it for what is was is not balanced. It is blind. It is **cultural amnesia.**

50. I am concerned that the proposed Te Mātaiaho reset weakens this commitment in the following ways:

    a. The draft learning areas do not maintain the same degree of mandatory engagement with Aotearoa histories as a foundational, Treaty-based curriculum obligation.

    b. The proposed framework allows for greater localisation and school-level discretion in how histories are taught, which risks inconsistent or superficial engagement with difficult colonial histories in mainstream settings.

c. For our kura, the embedding of Aotearoa histories as a mandatory area was affirmation that the Crown's education system recognised the experiences of our tīpuna. Weakening that mandate signals a retreat from that recognition.

51. For our ākonga and tamariki Māori, a curriculum that does not require authentic engagement with their own histories and local knowledge, denies them the right to see their tīpuna, their whenua, and their experiences reflected and honoured in their education.

THE PREJUDICE – KO TE WHAKAHĀWEATANGA

52. The removal of section 127(1)(d) of the Education and Training Act 2020 has caused, and continues to cause, direct and ongoing prejudice to Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga and the whānau, hapū, and ākonga it serves. That provision was not merely procedural — it was the legislative expression of the Crown's duty of active protection of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori as taonga, giving that duty operational force at the level of school governance. Its removal has created a structural gap that no amount of discretionary curriculum guidance can fill.

53. For a kura like ours, whose entire pedagogical foundation rests on te reo Māori as the medium of instruction, tikanga Māori as the epistemological framework, Te Kiingitanga as our guiding principles and values and mātauranga Māori as a co-equal knowledge system, the loss of that legislative obligation is not abstract. It removes the Crown's structural commitment to the very conditions that make our kura's model possible — and legitimate — within the state education system.

54. Without that legislative anchor, funding, resourcing, staffing, and school board decision-making downstream of curriculum policy are no longer driven by obligation but by discretion, and discretion has historically operated to the detriment of Māori medium education. As I mentioned I have experienced first-hand where the activism of Māori education started from, been a staunch Māori educator setting the foundation of a kura kaupapa pedagogy and tribal narrative at Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga, that spans across 40 years. Kei te rawekeweke te karauna i te Tiriti o Waitangi.

55. The Crown carried out this removal without prior consultation or engagement with our kura kaupapa Māori — nor with Ngā Kura ā Iwi whom we affiliate to, and in breach of the duty of good faith — meaning that the community most affected by the change had

no opportunity to be heard before the structural protection on which their kura depends was taken away.

56. The prejudice is therefore both immediate and prospective: it undermines the operating environment of Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga today, while exposing future generations of ākonga to an education system in which the Crown's obligation to actively protect their reo, their tikanga, and their mātauranga has been quietly legislated away. He takahi mana, he takahi tikanga he takahe i ngā mataapono a te Tiriti o Waitangi i hainatia e ngā tūpuna o ngā tamariki, ngā ākonga o Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga.

REMEDIES – KO NGA WHAKATIKATIKA

57. On behalf of Te Wharekura o Rakaumanga, I respectfully ask the Tribunal to find that:

    a. The Crown be found to have breached te Tiriti o Waitangi by removing section 127(1)(d) of the Education and Training Act 2020 without prior consultation or engagement with kura kaupapa Māori, Māori communities, or other Treaty partners affected by that legislative change.
    b. The Tribunal is asked to recommend that section 127(1)(d), or an equivalent legislative provision of equivalent or greater protective effect, be reinstated to restore the structural obligation on school boards to recognise and provide for the place of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori.

    c. The finalisation of Te Mātaiaho be **suspended and paused** pending genuine Treaty-compliant engagement with kura kaupapa Māori and Māori communities.

    d. Mātauranga Māori be recognised as an independent and co-equal knowledge system within the curriculum, not merely as a lens or perspective within mainstream learning areas.

    e. Aotearoa histories retain their mandatory status as a curriculum-wide obligation.

CROWN BREACHES

58. Although my primary expertise is in Māori medium education, I speak to the legislative removal of section 127(1)(d) as someone who has lived through every

major iteration of Crown education policy since the Native Schools era of the 1950s. I was educated in a system designed to assimilate me. I watched this community rebuild its reo from ground zero. I have worked in and around this kura for over forty years through Think Big, Tomorrow's Schools, the National Standards years, and every curriculum refresh in between. I know what Crown indifference looks like, and I know what Crown hostility looks like. What distinguishes this Government's approach is not merely its policy positions — it is the deliberate speed and unapologetic arrogance with which it has moved to dismantle protections that took us generations to build, at precisely the moment when the wider public — Māori and non-Māori — has never been more engaged with, and more supportive of, te reo Māori, Te Ao Māori, and mātauranga Māori. The Government is not reflecting the motu. It is moving against it.

59. I address this section because the removal of section 127(1)(d) of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act) directly affects the environment in which kura kaupapa Māori and all tamariki Māori are educated. The legislative amendment and the curriculum reset must be understood together as a cumulative erosion of the Crown's Treaty obligations in education.

60. Section 127(1)(d), as it stood prior to amendment, required school boards to provide a curriculum that recognised and provided for the place of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in New Zealand society. This provision gave operational force to the Crown's duty under the Treaty to actively protect Māori taonga — including te reo Māori — at the level of individual school governance and daily educational practice.

61. The Crown's duty to actively protect Māori taonga is well established in Waitangi Tribunal jurisprudence. It is not a passive obligation. Active protection requires the Crown to put in place structural mechanisms and resourcing — including legislative obligations — that ensure taonga are not merely tolerated but positively maintained and transmitted. Section 127(1)(d) was one such mechanism. Its removal leaves a structural gap that cannot be filled by discretionary curriculum guidance alone.

62. The removal of section 127(1)(d) was carried out without prior consultation and engagement with kura kaupapa Māori and Māori communities who depend on that legislative protection. This unilateral act is, in my submission, a breach of the duty of

good faith. Good faith in the Treaty relationship is not satisfied by a Crown decision to remove a protection and then invite submissions on a replacement curriculum framework. The sequence matters: removal first, engagement second, is not good faith engagement.

HEI WHAKAKAPI

63. From my perspective, in with all my years of experience in the Māori medium education sector, the Crown's approach signals a willingness to treat the legislative protections that Māori have secured through decades of advocacy that I have personally engaged in, as negotiable and reversible —without consent, and without genuine partnership. This undermines the foundation of trust upon which a meaningful Treaty relationship in education must be built.

64. Therefore, I ask the Tribunal to find that the removal of section 127(1)(d) without consultation and engagement with Kura Kaupapa Māori was inconsistent with the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, including the principle of active protection, and constituted a breach of the duty of good faith owed by the Crown to Māori as Treaty partners.

65. My testimony is that the removal of section 127(1)(d) was not Treaty-compliant and I ask the Tribunal to recommend that section 127(1)(d), or an equivalent legislative protection, be reinstated to give structural force to the Crown's Treaty obligations in education.

66. Regardless, whatever the Crown decides to do with section 127(1)(d) of the Education and Training Act 2020, and whatever form the final Te Mātaiaho curriculum takes, Te Wharekura o Rākaumangamanga will continue to honour, recognise, and give effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi in everything we do. We put our name to the 1859 list of schools around the country, *"Te Rārangi Rangatira – Schools that will continue to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi"* petition run in November last year. At last count, 47 Ngā Kura ā Iwi schools signed it.

67. As I mentioned in the beginning of my evidence, our kura philosophy is grounded in Te Kiingitanga. The kura's own mission statement is drawn directly from a proclamation of Kiingi Tāwhiao which is where I will leave my kōrero today.

"Maaku anoo e hanga tooku nei whare"

I will build and fashion my own house.

King Pōtatau Te Wherowhero

DATED at Huntly this 24th day of March 2026

John Rangiteremauri Heremia