IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL **WAI 3565**

CONCERNING	the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
IN THE MATTER OF	Te Tinihanga o Ngā Mātāpono o te Tiriti – the Treaty Principles Reform Urgent Inquiry (Wai 3565)
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	A claim by Puhi Ariki Rita Beckmannflay for herself and on behalf of her Hereditary Tane Ariki Rangatira Rangatiratanga Tātai of Taotahi, of Ngāti Torehina ki Mataure Ō Hau. concerning the omission of Te Reo Māori on legal tender (Wai 2493)

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF RITA BECKMANNFLAY

Dated 18 May 2026

RECEIVED
Waitangi Tribunal
18 May 26
Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

LOADER
LEGAL

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Te Taotahi Pepeha

Ko Panaki, Mai Te Waharoa O Te Taotahi Marae Ki Tangaroa;
Ko Te Piki Puke O Te Taotahi, Mai Te Waharoa O Te Taotahi Marae;
Ko Te Kai Kupenga Pa, Mai Te Waharoa Ki Te Wiroa;
Ko Te Tapui, Mai Te Waharoa O Taniwharau Marae;
Ko Mata-ure Ki Whangaroa Te Moana;
Ko Pateretere, Ko Wairere Nga Awa Iti;
Ko Te Piki Puke O Te Taotahi Te Maunga;
Ko Tu-nui-o-rangi Te Waka;
Ko Ngati Torehina Te Ira Tangata O Mataure;
Ko Ngati Torehina Te Karanga Hapū O Mataure;
Ko Whakamuhu, Ko Karamemere Etahi Urupa;
Ko Te Kai Kupenga Te Pā;
Ko Te Taotahi Te Marae;
Ko Te Kokako Te Ariki.

Te Taotahi Whakataukī

“Ehara ma Te Kai Kupenga e hi mai I te ika; engari ma te moana Te Kai Kupenga te whakaki” - “It’s not that the net takes the fish from the sea; it’s that the sea brings the fish to the net.”

Te Taotahi Tane Tātai (Ancient Lineage)

	Birth	Death	Ariki Descendant	Relationship to me
				Great (x6)
c.1600			Te Kokako	Grandfather
			Nehe	Great (x5)
				Grandfather
			Motatou	Great (x4)
c.1700				Grandfather
	b.1750	~1862	(Te Tao)tahi	Great (x3)
			Whakarongorua	Grandfather
	b.1775	~1850	Te Whakaariki Taotahi	Great (x2)
				Grandfather
c.1800	b.1814	~1885	Hooni Kingi Taotahi	Great-Grandfather
	b.1874	d.1938	Hōne Johnny Taotahi	Grandfather
c.1900	b.1929	d.1980	Aubrey Puhipi Taotahi	Father
	b.1950	Living	Wayne Aubrey Taotahi	Eldest Son
				(My Eldest Brother)

Introduction

1. My name is Rita Beckmannflay. I provide this evidence in support of the urgent inquiry concerning Treaty clauses and the limited recognition of The Treaty of Waitangi 1840 within important areas of New Zealand's legislative and institutional framework.

2. My evidence focuses on the Reserve Bank of New Zealand / Te Pūtea Matua as an example of a significant public institution where there is limited statutory recognition of Māori and The Treaty of Waitangi 1840, despite increasing acknowledgement of Māori economic interests and wellbeing within New Zealand society.

3. I am the claimant in Wai 2493, a claim concerning the Crown's imposition of a racially biased monetary system on Māori, including the absence of Te Reo Māori on New Zealand legal tender. That claim has been before the Tribunal since 2011. My evidence in this inquiry draws on the knowledge of the Reserve Bank, the financial system, and the absence of Treaty protections within it that I have developed in the course of bringing that claim.

Importance of the Reserve Bank

4. The Reserve Bank is one of the most powerful public institutions in New Zealand. Its decisions influence monetary policy, inflation, interest rates, banking regulation, financial stability, and the wider economic wellbeing of communities throughout Aotearoa.

5. The Reserve Bank therefore has major influence over matters that directly affect Māori communities, whānau wellbeing, housing affordability, business development, access to capital, and long-term intergenerational prosperity.

Limited Recognition of Māori and The Treaty of Waitangi 1840 in the Legislation

6. I have reviewed the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 2021 and related strategic documents published by the Reserve Bank.

7. In my view, it is significant that the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 2021 does not contain an express Treaty clause.

8. The legislation does not require the Bank to give effect to The Treaty of Waitangi 1840, to actively protect Māori interests, to engage in partnership

with Māori, or to take Treaty principles into account in its core decision-making functions.

9. This is notable because many modern New Zealand statutes now contain explicit Treaty provisions recognising the constitutional significance of The Treaty of Waitangi 1840.

10. By contrast, the Reserve Bank legislation contains only very limited references to Māori.

11. I understand that one of the principal references appears in Schedule 1 of the Act relating to employment matters, including consideration of "the employment requirements of Māori" and "the need for involvement of Māori as employees of the Bank."

12. In my view, these references are narrow and administrative in nature. They do not create substantive obligations concerning Māori economic wellbeing, Māori participation in financial decision-making, or the Crown's Treaty obligations within the banking and financial system.

Reserve Bank Strategic Framework and Te Ao Māori

13. I also understand that the Reserve Bank itself has increasingly adopted strategic language and institutional frameworks grounded in The Treaty of Waitangi 1840 and te ao Māori.

14. Since the time of my submission Wai2493, the Reserve bank has made a number of soft launches including but not limited to starting to use a dual title, and some beginnings of te reo on some legal tender denominations. They have also paid an undisclosed koha to a northland iwi to establish a narrative of their Tane Mahuta identity.

15. The Bank now refers to itself as Te Pūtea Matua and has publicly stated that it seeks to incorporate concepts such as kaitiakitanga, intergenerational stewardship, wellbeing, Māori economic participation.

16. The Reserve Bank has also issued a The Treaty of Waitangi 1840 statement identifying principles such as partnership, equity, and active protection.

17. However, these commitments largely exist at the level of policy, strategy, speeches, organisational culture, and internal practice, rather than binding statutory obligation.

18. I consider there to be a significant difference between:

    a. voluntary institutional commitments; and

    b. enforceable legal duties established by Parliament.

19. Without a Treaty clause, Māori participation and protection may depend on the views or priorities of current leadership rather than enduring constitutional obligations.

20. In my view, the Reserve Bank example demonstrates the issue before this inquiry. The Crown's current proposals do not address the gaps in legislation where Treaty obligations are absent or weak. Instead, they propose to weaken Treaty obligations across legislation more broadly. The result is that Māori protections move closer to the Reserve Bank position: voluntary, discretionary, and dependent on the goodwill of current leadership rather than enduring legal obligation. That is not what was agreed in 1840, and it is not what the Treaty requires.

Broader Constitutional Concerns

21. I also consider that the absence of Treaty clauses within major economic legislation reflects a wider constitutional issue in New Zealand, where Māori interests are often acknowledged symbolically or strategically, but not fully embedded within statutory decision-making frameworks.

22. This is particularly important given the growing significance of the Māori economy, including:

    a. iwi investment entities;

    b. Māori land development;

    c. housing initiatives;

    d. agribusiness;

    e. infrastructure investment; and

    f. intergenerational asset management.

23. Despite this, Māori do not appear to have guaranteed statutory participation rights or Treaty-based protections within the core legislative framework governing the Reserve Bank.

24. In my view, The Treaty of Waitangi 1840 should not be confined to social policy areas alone. It should also inform economic governance and financial institutions because these systems have profound impacts on Māori wellbeing and rangatiratanga.

Potential Effect of Treaty Clauses

25. I consider that a meaningful Treaty clause within Reserve Bank legislation could:

    a. require consideration of Māori economic wellbeing;

    b. strengthen partnership obligations;

    c. improve Māori participation in economic governance;

    d. encourage active protection of Māori economic interests; and

    e. better recognise the constitutional status of The Treaty of Waitangi 1840 within public decision-making.

Conclusion

26. For these reasons, I support the urgent inquiry.

27. I respectfully say that stronger Treaty clauses within legislation are necessary to ensure that Māori rights, interests, wellbeing, and rangatiratanga are not dependent solely on discretionary policy choices, but are properly recognised within the law itself.

Dated 18 May 2026

Rita Beckmannflay

TO: The Registrar, Waitangi Tribunal, Wellington;
All Counsel – WAI 3565 Te Tinihanga o Ngā Mātāpono o te Tiriti – the Treaty Principles Reform Urgent Inquiry