WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

Wai 3585

CONCERNING the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND a claim by Michaela Rangitaawa-Schofield on behalf of herself, all Māori and in particular, Māori of Te Roha Pōtae and Rākiura

MEMORANDUM-DIRECTIONS OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

The Registrar will please enter this matter on the register of claims and give it the next available Wai number. The register should note that the claim was received on 4 September 2026.

The claimant should please take note of the 'Wai' number reference at the top of the page. Please use this claim number in any communication with the Tribunal.

This claim is lodged Michaela Rangitaawa-Schofield on behalf of herself, all Māori and in particular, Māori of Te Roha Pōtae and Rākiura, and concerns the abrogation of Māori rangatiratanga through the silencing of Māori and lack of Māori participation in local government. The claimant alleges that the Crown has breached the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi by:

- failing to ensure Māori are able to exercise tino rangatiratanga through participating in local government decision making;
- taking active steps to limit the influence of Māori in local government;
- failing to ensure Māori have a guaranteed seat on local governments within their rohe;
- failing to ensure Māori participate in local elections;
- failing to ensure options are available for Māori to appropriately and adequately participate and be represented in local government; and
- creating deficient legislation regarding local government that does not sufficiently recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori rights and interests, and the right of Māori to participate in decisions which impact them.

The claimant seeks a variety of relief, including recommendations that the Crown:

- redesign the local government system to ensure that tino rangatiratanga is realised and Māori can participate in local government decision making;
- establish a guaranteed Māori ward or other means of guaranteed Māori representation in every local government area;
- establish a dedicated Māori local government voting strategy and a dedicated Māori local government voting strategy; and
- amend the LGA to include a need to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The claimant may amend this claim at a later stage. In any case the Tribunal may require the claimant to prepare a fully particularised statement of claim before the claim can be heard.

The Tribunal currently runs district and kaupapa inquiry programmes in which claims are grouped either by district or by kaupapa (thematic) issue. Historical claims are those that raise grievances which arose before 21 September 1992. Contemporary claims have grievances that arose on or after that date. Some claims have both historical and contemporary grievances.

The allegations made in this claim are contemporary in nature. They pertain to local government and as such may be best suited for consideration in the Wai 3300, Tomokia ngā tatau o Matangireia – the Constitutional Kaupapa Inquiry.

The claimant should also note that this claim is registered only insofar as it concerns contemporary allegations of Treaty breaches by the Crown.

When the time comes for the claim to be prepared for hearing, the Tribunal will decide whether there are any matters in the present claim that the Tribunal may not inquire into. The claimant needs to be aware that there are some matters that the Tribunal is not allowed to inquire into, such as any Bill that has been introduced into Parliament (unless the Bill has been referred to the Tribunal under section 8 of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975). Also, when historical claims are settled, the settlement legislation usually forbids the Tribunal from inquiring further into the matters that have been settled.

The claimant also needs to be aware that the Tribunal does not make settlements. After the Tribunal has completed an inquiry into claims, it writes a report making recommendations to the Crown. It cannot tell the Crown what to do; it may only recommend that the Crown acts to address the negative consequences of its breaches of the principles of the Treaty.

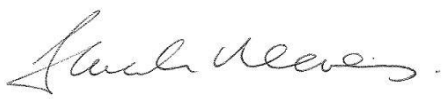
Legal Aid Services provides help for Waitangi Tribunal claimants. For advice on getting a lawyer or receiving funding, please contact Legal Aid Services at their Wellington central office or one of the local offices; the claimant should check their telephone directory for contact details.

Any questions about the contents of this document should be directed to The Registrar, Waitangi Tribunal, DX SX 11237, Wellington; phone (04) 914 3000, fax (04) 914 3001; email wt.registrar@justice.govt.nz.

The Registrar is to send a copy of this direction to the claimant and to:

- Crown Law Office;
- Te Kahui Whakatau (Treaty Settlements), Office for Māori Crown Relations – Te Arawhiti;
- Crown Forestry Rental Trust;
- Legal Aid Services;
- Te Puni Kōkiri; and
- All those on the notification list for Wai 3300, Tomokia ngā tatau o Matangireia – The Constitutional Kaupapa Inquiry.

DATED at Wellington this 29th day of September 2026



Judge Sarah Reeves
Deputy Chairperson
WAITANGI TRIBUNAL