IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL **WAI 898**

IN THE MATTER of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Rohe Potae District Inquiry (Wai 898)

AND

IN THE MATTER of a claim by **MONICA MIRIAMA MATAMUA**

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF MONICA MIRIAMA MATAMUA
DATED THIS 28TH DAY OF MARCH 2014

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1. Introduction

1.1. My name is Monica Matamua. I am of Ngati Hotu and of Ngati Hinewai.

1.2. I descend from Mihiterina, the daughter of Te Pikikotuku and Rangikowaea.

2. Interests of Ngati Hinewai and Ngati Hotu

2.1. The history of Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai is intertwined. We are sometimes called Ngati Hotu Hinewai. While it is true that we are closely related, I think it is important to recognize the unique identities of both.

2.2. Ngati Hotu are an ancient people. We have been here since the origin of time, prior to the arrival of Toi. We were the forest people, the turehu. We might have been oppressed following the migrations from Hawaiki, however, our existence is continued and marked within the links that we have to many iwi.

2.3. The two come together after two Hinewai sisters arrive in this country aboard Te Paepae-ki-Rarotonga and marry into the descendants of the Hotu people at Whakatane.

2.4. Since this time, our Hinewai links take us into the Whanganui, Tuwharetoa, Te Arawa, and north into Maniapoto. Because of these many links, we are sometimes called a buffer people.

2.5. Our historic territories were originally in the Bay of Plenty and covered much of the central north island as well as the Taupo district and over towards Hawkes Bay. We reached out from the summit of Ruapehu, down the Manganui a Te Ao River to its meeting with the Whanganui back up to Manunui and then to the junction of the Whakapapa river back to meet the summit of Ruapehu.

2.6. Following the wars, conflict and alliegances that have been made, our focus remains centered in at the junction of the Whanganui

and Whakapapa rivers at Taurewa, we are not so far along the Whanganui River that we lose our links with Tuwharetoa. Not so far upriver that we lose our ability to associate closely with the Whanganui people, and close enough to the Tuhua region to be able to maintain links with the Maniapoto people.

2.7. We do not and cannot deny our links with these particular iwi, however, we are more than just a buffer people. We exist in our own right, not just to bridge the gaps between others.

2.8. It is on this basis that we have existed, and continue to exist in this region.

3. Participation within other Inquiries

3.1. This is the fourth District Inquiry in which we have stood to maintain the identity of Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai. This will be the last time. Many have asked us to participate in the Taihape Inquiry to speak on our interests there, but I have been doing this for a very long time. It has to stop somewhere and I have decided that that somewhere is here.

3.2. We understand that matters raised in other districts are not for this Tribunal to consider, however, I still felt it important to raise the matters so that our claims within this region can be properly understood. In particular, Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai have set out our claims relating to:

i. The impacts of the wars that were waged in and around our territories which resulted in the capture and execution of Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai peoples;

ii. The Crownôs failure to treat rangatira such as Te Pikikotuku with respect;

iii. The operation of the Native Land Court and itôs processes which have resulted in significant land loss, particularly

within the overlapping regions of the Waimarino, Tauponuiatia and Rohe Potae regions;

iv. The compulsory acquisition of our lands for the North Island Main Trunk Rail through our lands;

v. The taking and use of our lands for the Taumarunui Native Township;

vi. The suppression of our Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai identity

4. Recognition out of Participation

4.1. One of the main reasons for our participation in the many inquiries has been to gain a presence in the area for our people. In this regard, I do feel that our participation in these other inquiries has been successful.

4.2. We have come through generations of being told that we were genocided, bred out of existence, or absorbed. As a result, other groups and local authorities refused to recognize us.

4.3. As we have told our histories and challenged those who have tried to keep us extinct, we have gradually gained some recognition in the region.

4.4. An example of this is that my son sits on the Maori Council for Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai. The Maori Council is a kind of a standing committee that provides advice to the Ruapehu District Council on maori issues.

4.5. While we are yet to see any major benefits from the establishment of the committee, which I will talk about later in this evidence, I am not completely unhappy with some of the progress that has been made.

4.6. With the recognition we have achieved, however, have come the many settlement groups that want us to be part of them so that they can claim our lands and taonga.

4.7. The very people who claimed to have wiped us from the face of the earth now come saying that we are one of their hapu so that their claims can be extended. They treat us nicely for the first part, then if we miss a meeting they forget us in the minutes. Then once they think they have captured our claims we become irrelevant and we are told that our claims will be settled for us. This is what happens time and time again.

4.8. To me this isn't whanaungatanga, it's just plain greed and because of this we continue to stand outside of the settlement groups that are sprouting up around us and claiming our lands.

4.9. We just have not been able to find much comfort in any of them. My biggest fear is that if we join one of the super groups, all the work that we have put into establishing our presence will be lost.

5. Interests within Te Rohe Potae District Inquiry

5.1. In my heart, I feel an affinity with all of those who carry the Hinewai name. In this regard, I feel a connection all the way into the northern tribes where hapu of Ngapuhi and Te Rarawa bear the name of Ngati Hinewai.

5.2. Similarly for the turehu of Ngati Hotu. When I hear stories that span the country that talk about the fairer folk or the patu paiarehe. In my heart we are all one people, we are connected.

5.3. I don't say these things to claim their land or their taonga, however, we feel the hurt when they suffer, and we feel their frustrations when we see them in struggle.

5.4. When you descend from someone like Te Pikikotuku, it becomes really hard to say you are from just one place. He was a rangatira,

like many of the time who really got around and our DNA can be found in many places.

5.5. The late Harry Kereopa was one of us and is an indication of our interests that reach up into the southern portions of the Rangitoto Tuhua region. Our interests there are small, however, these connections are very important to us. This was where we were driven to when we were defeated by Tuwharetoa. The area became a place of sanctuary for us. It was here that we again were forced to seek refuge when Government forces took over our marae at Takapuna in the 1870s to prevent Te Kooti and his forces escaping Te Rena.

5.6. I do not intend repeat the evidence that was provided at Waimiha. That was an amazing hearing and there isn't much I could say to add to the korero about the land losses that occurred through the region to make way for national progress.

5.7. When you look at what happened to build the railway in general, I think our people were were just in the way.

6. Support for Te Rohe Potae Leadership

6.1. Our people have been strong supporters of resistance movements, such as the Kingitanga, the Ringatu Church, Te Kere Ngataierua, Ratana and Pai Marire.

6.2. As I have mentioned, Te Pikikotuku was one of our great leaders. It was he who was a peacemaker that helped to end the fighting between Maniapoto and Haua after the massacre of Ngati Hotu at Cherry Grove in Taumarunui.

6.3. We discussed his histories in the Whanganui District Inquiry. Importantly, for the purposes of this Inquiry, it is important to mentiona that he was intimately involved in Te Ohaki Tapu, and a signatory to the 1883 petition.

6.4. Timitepo Hohepa gave evidence about Te Pikikotuku and his son, Himiona Te Pikikotuku who fought at Orakau. I have attached Mr Hohepaôs evidence to mine and marked it with the letter ñAò so that the information can inform this Tribunal of the stance that our people took.

6.5. It is because of this support that I think it is important for us to stand here in support of Maniapoto and their claims. If my tupuna would lay down their lives to defend the boundaries that they helped to establish, then standing here is the least I can do.

7. The Maori Council

7.1. As I have mentioned above, we are gradually gaining more recognition by local authorities, which I think is a result of our participation in the Waitangi Tribunal.

7.2. Before talking about the Council, however, I just want to give a bit of a mihi aroha to Hikaia Amohia and Archie Taiaroa.

7.3. We have come a long way since Hikaia Amohia stood in the 60ôs at a Council meeting to oppose the Tongariro Power Development Scheme. The mayor of the time who was chairing the meeting told Hikaia to shut up and sit down as he had no interests in the rivers that needed to be considered.

7.4. Those were hard times. Then Archie Taiaroa was pushed by the people to run for the District Council and succeeded. Unfortunately, he was the only Maori and he would just get voted down. I canôt imagine what this would have done to his spirit.

7.5. He carried all of our hopes, but in the meetings it would just be him there by himself.

7.6. He was a dignified man that achieved a lot for us in his lifetime. He gave his life to us, for us, and we didnôt really know how much he did for us until he was gone. Since then, everything just seems

to have hung in place. It seems like a lot of his initiatives have died with him

7.7. I know that when he stood in front of the Tribunal, he stood for Ngati Haua. But what he did in this region, he did for all of us making sure we all had a say and that none of us were forgotten.

7.8. I miss him. We all do.

7.9. Since then, we have all put our support into getting another of us onto the Ruapehu District Council. Peter Pehi. He stood alongside our Uenuku people in the Whanganui Inquiry. He is full of passion and dedicated to our people and I hope that he will be our next mayor.

7.10. Hopefully, Peter wonôt be there by himself and we can support him perhaps a bit more that we did for Archie.

7.11. In this regard, as I have mentioned, my son sits on the Maori Council of the Ruapehu District Council.

7.12. It was established about 3 years ago to take responsibility and inform the Council on every day running issues that impact on Maori in the region. We had hoped that it woud help Maori for development purposes.

7.13. When it started we were full of hope, however, nothing seems to have come out of it and the meetings seem to have stopped.

7.14. One of the significant issues raised was about the fencing off of rivers. Because they arenôt fenced off, the stock go straight in and at times we see dead cows, sheep or even goats floating down the river.

7.15. We wanted the fencing to be initiated along with a planting program of natives along the riverbanks. We were told that $100,000 would be provided for this. Unfortunately, nothing has been started.

7.16. We think this initiative is an important one.

7.17. All our rivers are connected. Some people down the river take their drinking water from it. We should be doing everything that we can to make sure the water is clean and I don't think we are doing enough.

7.18. I think this is an initiative that needs to be followed up on and given teeth. I don't know what happened to the $100,000 that was proposed, but maybe the commitment needs to be rekindled.

7.19. It's not just this initiative though. It's the whole idea of the Maori Council.

7.20. Perhaps we need something with a bit more teeth. Something more than a Maori Council. Something that can't just be put aside and forgotten when people get busy or move onto other things.

7.21. We need something to ensure that Peter finds more support than we were able to give for Archie and I'm not sure that an unfunded standing committee can achieve this.

7.22. So while I might be happy with the recognition that Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai are beginning to achieve, we need to see some results and outcomes. We need to know that initiatives will stand the test of time. We need to know that the visions of our leaders will not die with them, that they will become the reality for our future generations.

7.23. For us to have certainty, I believe the Crown needs to provide the Local Authority with some direction.

7.24. I don't know if the answer lies in creating dedicated Maori seats or if it lies in a statutory board that the Council has to listen to. What I do know is that we need a little bit more than what currently exists.

7.25. We owe it to those like Hikaia and Archie who stood up against the system to try and make things better for us.

7.26. While I have hopes for the future, it is my view that the system restricts our ability to exercise authority rather than providing us with opportunities to exercise tino rangatiratanga.

7.27. In this regard, we would like findings and recommendations from this Tribunal that would ensure that the current system of local government is changed to ensure that the maori voice of our area is can be heard and respected.

8. Concluding Comments

8.1. It is with some pride and some sadness that I bring my efforts before the Tribunal to an end.

8.2. It has been a long journey for me and I have lost many along the way. In particular, Iki, my husband, my staunch supporter through all this. He shared my dreams and worked tirelessly to help me achieve them. We have come far, but I think we still have far to go.

8.3. Our dream of living and thriving on our whenua at Te Rena is a matter for the Whanganui Tribunal to consider.

8.4. Our dream of having a maori mayor, thatôs something for us and Peter Pehi to work on.

8.5. I do worry that when I die, my efforts will be lost. My son Arin is a fighter. He is strong and I am extremely proud of his efforts on our trusts and in the council to try and help our local maori community.

8.6. My journey for Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai over the past decades has really been about our ability to assert our identity standing on our own mana and I believe that we are on the way because of the recognition we are beginning to achieve.

8.7. This is a fight that I donôt want my kids or mokos to have to fight from the start again and I do worry that the gains that we have made for Ngati Hotu and Ngati Hinewai will be eroded when the

Tribunal goes away and others try to ignore us again or absorb us into something else.

8.8. I want to be clear that our desire to stand apart is not an effort to degrade others, however, we donôt deserve to be degraded so that we can be made to fit into what the Crown wants to settle with.

8.9. We would like findings and recommendations from this Tribunal that recognize the efforts that Ngati Hinewai and Ngati Hotu have made to come before it standing on our own mana.

8.10. Yes, our history says that we are a part of all of the larger tribes around us, however, to make us to pick a side for the purposes of settlement degrades us and causes conflict.

8.11. When you force us under one tribe you tell us that we have to disconnect from the others. How can we do that?

8.12. We wonôt do that. We are still here. We arenôt going anywhere.

Monica Matamua