

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**Wai 2180, Wai 1705, Wai 647, Wai 588,
Wai 385, Wai 581, Wai 1888**

IN THE MATTER OF

the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 and the
Taihape: Rangitikei ki Rangipo Inquiry
(Wai 2180)

IN THE MATTER OF

a claim by Isaac Hunter, Utiku Potaka,
Maria Taiuru, Hari Benevides, Moira
Raukawa-Haskell, Te Rangiangoa
Hawira, Kelly Thompson, Barbara Ball and
Richard Steedman on behalf of themselves,
the Iwi organisations who have authorised
them to make this claim and the Mōkai
Pātea Waitangi Claims Trust (**Wai 1705**)

AND

a claim by Maria Taiuru and others for and
on behalf of Wai 647 Claimants (**Wai 647**)

AND

a claim by Isaac Hunter and Maria Taiuru
and others for and on behalf of the Wai 588
Claimants (**Wai 588**)

AND

a claim by Neville Franze Te Ngahoa
Lomax and others for and behalf of the
Potaka Whanau Trust and Nga Hapu o
Ngati Hauti (**Wai 385**)

AND

a claim by Neville Franze Te Ngahoa
Lomax and others for and behalf of Te
Runanga o Ngati Hauti (**Wai 581**)

AND

a claim by Iria Te Rangi Halbert and others
for and behalf of the Wai 1888 Claimants
(**Wai 1888**)

**Statement of Evidence of Raihania Potaka
12 February 2018**

Solicitor

Leo Watson
Barrister and Solicitor
342 Gloucester Street, Taradale
Napier 4112

Telephone: 06-650 7119
Mobile: 027 274 9068
Email: leowatson@paradise.net.nz

Counsel Acting: L H Watson

Heke iho ki Hauiti

Heke iho ki Haeretekura

Heke iho ki Tamatereka

Heke iho ki Manukahoka

Heke iho ki Putai

Heke iho ki Te Kirikaingaere

Heke iho ki Taami

Heke iho ki Potaka

Heke iho ki Utiku

Heke iho ki Tumihau

Heke iho ki Tauaiti

1. Ko Raihania Potaka toku ingoa. My father Tauaiti Epiha Potaka was raised at Rata on the Taraketi block at Te Hou Hou. His father Tumihau (Jack) Potaka was married to Raihania Keepa Waitere, he was the youngest child of Utiku and Rora Potaka who both descend from Hauiti. I didn't know my Koro Jack who passed away before I was born, but like his father before him, he was about retaining the land for the future generations. Utiku was quoted as saying "and I desire that all my land shall be inalienable by either sale or mortgage"
2. My parents met in Rata and then married in 1959 at St Barnabas Anglican Church at Rata it was the first wedding to be held there. Reverend Hui Vercoe and Reverend Kingi Ihaka were the officiating ministers at the time. I am their eldest and was born in 1960.

3. We had a great life, during the 1960's growing up in rural Rata, the four eldest siblings all attended Hunterville Consolidated School along with our cousins, some of them were actually our aunties and uncles, the Manunui, Potaka, Taiuru, Kingi, Lambert, Holland, Down, Metekingi and Rangi whanau.
4. From picking spuds, docking, shearing sheds, birthday parties, picking fruit and walnuts, eeling, picking watercress collecting mushrooms to sell, attending Sunday School, swimming down the Rangitikei River and our favourite swimming hole at Nanny Bo's whare next to the Pourewa and of course helping our Koro on the farm.
5. Whanaungatanga and Kaitiakitangi was thriving at this time in Rata. Most of the last generation have gone now and today Rata has become a land lifeless of our people. Most of our descendants have lived away from our turangawaewae for at least 40 years or more and rarely come back to our Marae. Interestingly enough whanau who have not been bought up here have returned here more frequently than those who lived here in the past.
6. All these whanau were working their farms from sheep to dairy farming which were all *take whenua*. Four or five of the farms still remain in Maori title, the rest I believe have reverted to General title. Colonisation has taken our people in another direction away from the things that were cherished and jealously guarded by our tupuna. The Colonisers knew that many of our people would eventually give in and transfer their Maori lands into European title because it was too difficult to raise finance by way of mortgages for Maori land as it was multiply owned. Many of our whanau also had very valid reasons for selling. This has been the case with so many of our Hauiti whanau because they weren't taught their whakapapa and what the importance of holding on to the whenua meant to our tupuna which was to be passed down from generation to generation. It was

our inheritance and we didn't have to pay for it but today our childrens children are suffering from loss of land.

7. What will become of our future generations of Ngati Hauiti? Many of our whanau fought in both WW1 and WW2 with so much spirit and pride for this country of New Zealand, Aotearoa, they died and left families alone and yet they were not afforded the same privileges as their pakeha comrades.
8. This is my mother's whakapapa:

Heke iho ki Hauiti

Heke iho ki Hinehuanoa

Heke iho ki Toroiro

Heke iho ki Tautahi

Heke iho ki Tarehe

Heke iho ki Ruaiti

Heke iho ki Tuhaoterangi

Heke iho ki Te Upokoiri II (Ngai Te Upokoiri II)

Heke iho ki Maihi Ngapapa

Heke iho ki Rutakau

Heke iho ki Te Rina

Heke iho ki Rangipo Metekingi

Heke iho ki Maihi Metekingi

Heke iho ki Whakaari Te Rangitakuku

Heke iho ki Erena Metekingi Anson

9. My mother, Erena Metekingi-Anson was raised at Putiki in Whanganui she is, the youngest daughter of Whakaari (Tuks) Te Rangitakuku Metekingi and Wikitoria Keepa nee Bailey. In 1958 my grandparents and my mother left Putiki and moved to Rata and lived on the Taraketi block beside state highway one, the whenua had been leased out on a 99 year lease and had come back.
10. My mum's family were heavily involved in Maori Land Trusts throughout the Whanganui, Rangitikei and Horowhenua rohe, my grand-father was the Chairman of the Morikaunui and Atihau Incorporations based in Whanganui, he was also the chairman of the Aorangi/Awarua Trust. The retention of Maori land was of significant importance to my Koro Tuks. Koro worked with many of the whanau from various Iwi he belonged to, supporting them regarding their land, as I was growing up we were inundated with people coming to talk to him and ringing him for advice.
11. Whakapapa has played a big part in my life, it is the pillar of Maori Society, binding and unifying the many generations together. Maori have never accepted the system of a closed world believing that the spiritual realm connects with the physical realm and vice versa. Through my research with whakapapa I become very animated when encouraging others in connecting to themselves, its in my blood. I've been privileged to have whakapapa experts in my midst amongst my Hunia, Winiata and Potaka whanau who have shared so much of their knowledge with me over the years.
12. While growing up at Rata the reo was very seldom heard, I do recall one of our kuia who spoke Maori, I don't think she had anyone to talk to on a regular basis, that was Nanny Ponga Manunui. She used the reo at the Marae and at home and I recall her also having conversations with my Nanny Nia. She was brought up by Kui Merehira Te Taipu of Ngati Haukaha. Sadly the reo was disappearing and there were only kuia left within Rata that spoke the reo. I heard that these kuia spoke te reo Maori whilst growing up as

children but as they got older they had forgotten and only spoke rarely. This was the era where our whanau were strapped and punished severely for speaking their own language.

13. This showed me that the impact on our Ngati Hauiti people has been huge, the loss of our language has been detrimental to the future of our mokopuna. I believe the Crown have a duty to recognise the value in preserving our Maori language and to make it compulsory, why because it would help to educate pakeha society and give them a better understanding of the Maori world view. The revival of the Welsh people and their language is an encouraging example of what can be achieved. We need to be more proactive in raising the awareness and the status of te reo maori so that our childrens children won't become the lost generation.
14. When I started working for Ngati Hauiti during the late 90's as a volunteer then as a health worker and cultural co-ordinator we were at the beginning of the restoration and resurgence of re-building our Iwi base through whakapapa and registrations, that was a huge mahi, the pay was a pittance but the mahi itself was mostly rewarding. We held many successful wananga to re-connect whanau back to Hauiti, many had no understanding or knowledge of their whakapapa and it was it such an honour and delight to share that knowledge with them. Now these were very exciting times, this strategy worked along with good old Maori ingenuity and lots of hui, wananga, rangatahi hui, fundraising art auctions and a regular Waka Hoe on the Rangitikei. But how could we sustain this without any economic base?
15. The korero that whanau shared about their land loss and alienation was very real and sad for me as I felt terrible because my whanau on both sides still retain some of our lands. Unfortunately the current system that exists has not worked for whanau, assimilation and colonisation have been at the forefront. On our tomokanga our tupuna WIniata Te Whaaro stands there as a constant reminder of the colonising power of money, the power of the gun a tool of the first

colonisers and the bible which symbolises the church were all the weaponry to alienate us from our language, our culture and our whenua.

Raihania Potaka
12 February 2018