

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL
OF NEW ZEALAND

IN THE MATTER OF: The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: The Wairarapa ki Tararua Inquiry –
Wai 863

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: The claims of Rangitāne o Tāmaki-
Nui-a-Rua -**Wai 166**

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF KURAIRIRANGI PEARSE

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Introduction

1. My name is **KURAIRIRANGI PEARSE**. I was born at Kaitoki on 4 July 1935.
2. I was named after a Rangitāne tupuna Te Kurairirangi, who is a common ancestor to a number of families who lived in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua. Te Kurairirangi is the sister of Kapa. Kapa is one of the tupuna in our meeting house here at Makirikiri.
3. My father was Nireaha Paewai and my mother was Mavis Barclay. Dad's family lived at Tahoraiti. My father owned some land left to him by his mother, Rangirangi Paewai, the daughter of Manahi Paewai and Paraneha Ihaia. This land was located at a place known as Tiratu which is east of Kaitoki. This is the land now owned and farmed by my brother, Ringakaha.
4. My mother was raised at Kaitoki by Paraneha Ingo Hori. Paraneha is the daughter of Hori Herehere who was a prominent rangatira during the 19th century and he was heavily involved with the Native Land Court process. Hori was the eldest son of two other well known 19th century Rangitāne tupuna, Paora Te Rangiwakaewa and Maata Te Opukahu.
5. My Rangitāne hapū are Ngāti Pakapaka and Ngāti Mutuahi. The tupuna that binds those of us from Kaitoki Pā and Tahoraiti is Te Rangiwakaewa. My Rangitāne whakapapa is set out at page 21 of the whakapapa booklet "He Āta Tātai Tupuna - Tātai Hono Hoki."
6. I live at Tahoraiti today on my husband's ancestral land.

Growing up at Kaitoki

7. Growing up at Kaitoki was something special because many of the families who lived close by were related. There were a number of homes

at the Kaitoki pā where about eight families lived and we all grew up together.

8. Little did I know as a child that one of the reasons we all lived at Kaitoki and in close proximity to each other was because this was one of the few pieces of land that was still owned by our people. Most of the land was owned by Pākehā farmers.
9. Our nanny owned another piece of land at Kaitoki and soon after she died we moved to her land. When we moved there it was being leased to a Pākehā farmer. A lot of the land at Kaitoki and Tahoraiti was leased to Pākehā when I was growing up.
10. The Kaitoki Pā provided a central focal point for those living in the Kaitoki area. It was similar to a modern day youth centre. We would play table tennis, hold dances and enjoyed all sorts of fun activities. We used to attend Church there, the Ratana faith would hold services.
11. There were other pā in the Dannevirke area. There was Kaitoki, Tahoraiti and another pā just down the road from Tahoraiti known as Whiti-te-ra. When we were young our parents did a lot of visiting between the pā. Visiting has become less frequent over the last twenty years due to many of the families moving away from the Kaitoki and Tahoraiti area to find work as the amount of land that each respective family owns is not enough to sustain them economically. Few families are still living and working on their own land today.

Special Places at Kaitoki

12. There are a number of special places at Kaitoki.

Pinepine

13. The Pinepine area was near the Manawatu River and the lake known as Mohangaiti. In the period when the bush covered this area, Lake

Mohangaiti was, according to my mother, part of the Manawatu River and the Pinepine area was a flat piece of land joining the two. This was a well known area for the local Rangitāne people to gather kai.

14. I gather from what my mother told me that the Pinepine area was used not only for gathering kai from the Manawatu River but was also used as mara or gardens. My mother would refer to Pinepine as a wharf or landing place. From Pinepine, the food from the river or from the gardens was sorted into kete and taken by canoe along the river to local whānau or by cart to whānau who lived on the coast.

Lake Mohangaiti

15. The Mohangaiti Lake was very important to me when I was growing up. We used to get kakahi (a black freshwater pipi) and koura (small freshwater crayfish) from the lake. At times the entire Kaitoki pā would go to Mohangaiti and gather kakahi. It was good because the lake is on land owned by one of our Rangitāne whanaunga so we had no access problems.
16. When one of the whanau from Kaitoki, usually the Nikora whanau, was about to pass away a red weed would cover the entire lake and no-one went there during that time.
17. I recall my mother telling me about an occasion when the pā people gathered at Nanny Bella Chase's home near the lake. My mother and her cousin went out on a canoe onto Lake Mohangaiti and they got out into the middle of the lake and started talking about the kaitiaki in the lake, also known as Mohangaiti. They began pushing their paddles into the lake and saying "I wonder where Mohangaiti is?" After a while the lake became very rough and choppy. They became frightened and tried to get back to the shore but they lost their oars. My mother and her cousin began to scream, trying to get attention of people back at Bella Chase's house. One of the men heard their screams and managed to get them back to shore.

18. When they got home, my grandmother asked the girls what they had been doing and after some initial reluctance they told her. They were severely reprimanded for making fun of Mohangaiti.
19. My relationship with the lake diminished after we moved to the end of Kaitoki Road. Following the death of Nanny Bella's husband in a shed fire, the Chase family decided to scatter his ashes on the lake. From that time on the lake became tapu and no-one went there except for the Chase family.

The Manawatu River

20. When I was a child our lives were dominated by swimming and eeling primarily in the Manawatu River. We learnt a lot about eeling. We used hoop irons (a long piece of iron slightly curved at one end) spears, vine and later on we were taught how to bob for eels.
21. There were a number of swimming holes where we swam. The Kanihi was downstream from the Kaitoki bridge, the Twenty Footer about 100 metres east of the bridge, the Blue Hole near the cemetery where we would swing out on the branches of the willow trees into the middle of the river and, more recently, at Scot's Bay below the Manawatu hill.

Peketahi

22. I grew up hearing about our kaitiaki in the Manawatu River. This kaitiaki lived at the bend of the river to the left of the Kaitoki bridge. The Kanihi was a place below the old wooden Kaitoki bridge which was relatively shallow and had a lot of pāpā (clay). It was here our parents taught us to swim. They would throw us, gently, I hope, amongst the pāpā where we could grab at it in our floundering. However more often than not something seemed to push us up or there would be a stick or a small log to

grab on to. We knew that it was Peketahi the eel pushing us or Petetahi the log there to support us.

23. We soon grew in confidence knowing Peketahi was there to take care of us. In recent years members of our whānau have written a waiata in appreciation of Peketahi which is being passed on to our mokopuna.
24. This particular waiata is referred to in our waiata booklet that has been prepared for these hearings. This waiata is at page 28 of “Te Reo Tioriori Waiata of Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua.”
25. On many occasions when the Manawatu River flooded, sometimes coming to within three or four feet below the bridge, a log could be seen floating around and around under the bridge. Our old people would tell us it was Peketahi keeping watch and protecting our pā .
26. Peketahi appears in many forms, sometimes as a one legged crayfish, an eel, a stick or small log. Peketahi today mainly appears in the form of a small log when the Manawatu River is in flood.

Aotea Tuarua

27. When I was growing up the wharenuī at Tahoraiti was named Aotea. This was the second Aotea meeting house of this area (“Aotea Tuarua”). The first one was built in about 1600 and lived in by our tupuna, Te Rangiwhakaewa. Aotea Tuarua was built following a dispute between Te Kere and Paora Potangaroa in the late 19th century. Our meeting house today is the third Aotea meeting house in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua (“Aotea Tuatoru”).
28. In the 1960s the Ruahine Tribal Committee considered moving Aotea Tuarua closer to Dannevirke.

29. The Ruahine Tribal Committee was set up in the 1960s to assist local Māori with land issues, education, marae, fishing, wardens, kōhanga reo and local government. The committee was set up under the New Zealand Māori Council system through the Ikaroa District Council region.
30. Some of the people involved in that were Taninui-a-Rangi Nikora, Lui Paewai and Wi Walker. My mother, Mavis, was the secretary for the committee for many years.
31. I can remember the committee being responsible for implementing the many changes that occurred with laws relating to the ownership of Māori lands and the development of our land. I am not sure how successful they were but, from memory, this was one of the few committees with a Māori focus and Māori membership that was charged with the obligation of dealing with some of the Māori issues of the day.

Decision to move Aotea Tuarua

32. The Ruahine Tribal Committee, with the support of the local people, eventually decided to move Aotea Tuarua meeting house to its current site at Makirikiri. I was involved with the planning that took place for the actual removal and refurbishment of the new whareniui and wharekai.
33. A lot of our time was spent fundraising for the move. We made approaches to Government agencies, such as Māori Affairs, for funding. Initially, we found it very difficult to get help from the Government to fund our project. It wasn't until we used our connections within the Government such as Steve Watene and Ben Couch that we had some movement and were finally funded by the Department of Māori Affairs to assist with this project.
34. From memory, the majority of the money we used for the relocation and refurbishment was raised through fund raising. The money received from the Department of Māori Affairs was minimal.

35. I was involved in the refurbishment of Aotea Tuarua, particularly with the refurbishment of the inside of our whare. Willie Pine and I assisted with a lot of the kowhaiwhai work. We were responsible for doing the stencils right through to the painting of the majority of the kowhaiwhai.
36. Originally, the pou in Aotea Tuarua were not carved. They were simply pieces of rimu, kauri and totara which, I imagine, came from the local bush, Te Taperenui-a-Whatonga.
37. When the decision was made to move Aotea Tuarua to its current site, it was decided that those pieces of timber would be carved to represent some of our tupuna.
38. All of the exterior carvings on the verandah of Aota Tuatoru are from Aotea Tuarua.
39. I should also mention at this point that our dining room named Te Kurairirangi was the original dining room at Tahoraiti. That was moved here at the same time the whare tipuna was moved here.
40. Te Kurairirangi did not have that name when it was situated at Tahoraiti. It was given the name Te Kurairirangi when it was moved to this area by Johnny Hape. He chose the name because of Te Kurairirangi's connection to the people of our area.
41. Over time the whare kai became too small for our purposes and we decided to purchase another building from Ngaawapurua. This building was joined to the existing one and the whole complex takes on the name Te Kurairirangi.
42. After the Ruahine Tribal Committee made the decision to move Aotea Tuarua to its current site, our kaumātua and kuia indicated that it was up to my generation, to be responsible for the maintenance and decoration of the

Aotea Tuatoru. This was a task that we were only too happy to take on and we have attempted to complete this and to continue to maintain taonga of ours.

Hauora

43. I am a school teacher by profession and because of that fact I have always been aware of the importance and necessity of having and maintaining our health and wellbeing. To have good health, that is a state of complete spiritual, physical, mental and social wellbeing, not just an absence of disease, is a fundamental human right.
44. My father, Nireaha Paewai died at the age of 50 from Parkinson's Disease for which there was little relief in the 1950's. I watched my dad go from a well man to an invalid, who at his death, required complete care. My mother died of cancer at the age of 60. "Why?" I asked, when they were both in the prime of their lives.
45. Culture contact and the loss of our traditional wholesome foods, I believe, was responsible for our people dying so young. We had our Rongoa experts, (tohunga), but the loss of our native forest took our medicines with them. The epidemics of the 20th century claimed the lives of so many of our people both young and old.
46. As an iwi, we came to realize that we needed to take charge of our own destiny. The Ruahine Maori Committee had endeavoured to address health issues but more was required. In the late 1980's the need for health education became increasingly apparent. More culturally appropriate services, greater community follow up and support, improved access to medical and social services to encourage early treatment were recognised as areas of concern by our newly formed Rangitāne o Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua Incorporated Society.

47. In 1990 a sub-committee was formed to discuss with whanau and taurahere their health needs and how to access local services. An education programme was prepared and 8 marae-based hui were held. From these, a contract was sought with the then Manawatu-Wanganui Area Health.
48. In 1991, as part of a health promotion programme our whanau prepared and took a rongoa display to Otaki, Kimberly Hospital, Pahiatua and Dannevirke Hospitals.
49. In 1992 we were able to set up our own office with the local Public Health Nurses' rooms. At last we were beginning to have some real input.
50. As part of a new health system set up throughout New Zealand, the Central Region, as their strategy for dealing with the 'poor Maori health statistics' were calling for proposals from Maori groups. At the same time, we, in 1993, formulated with the help of whanau, a Health Needs Assessment, undertaken to assess the needs of our people in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua. This assessment revealed priority areas and provided statistics required to support our proposal to the Central Regional Health Authority.
51. Difficulties of access to pharmaceuticals and medical services due to high cost and lack of transport, were major factors preventing our people from accessing needed health care. From the survey 83% were in favour of having our own Māori health centre. Results also revealed the following as the main areas of concern through all age groups: smoking, high blood pressure, poor eyesight, hearing loss and asthma.
52. In the early 1990's we had multiple teenage deaths due to alcohol and teenage pregnancies among the 12-18 year age group. Drug use was on the increase due to stress and abuse within whanau.
53. In 1994 we became the first Māori Unit in Dannevirke to secure a contract under the Maori Health Initiatives programme and Rangitāne opened their

Health Centre in Dannevirke's main street. Whanau willingly became involved. Several women joined an Asthma Training Course under Makere Hight, National Maori Asthma Coordinator.

54. Since then, we have endeavoured to support our people in improving their health and to decrease those much referred to 'poor Maori health statistics'.
55. Hospital services, the Public Health Nurses and specialist services have been reduced or moved to Palmerston North causing added stress and strain on whanau. So support was all the more important by and for our own. In our desire to improve the wellbeing of our whanau, aroha and manaakitanga were paramount.
56. Of special significance to us has been the care for our kaumatua. In order to give them support and to improve their quality of life, a kaumatua group was set up. Activities were prepared and based on Taha Wairua, Taha Tinana, Taha Hinengaro, Taha Whanau. Today the kaumatua group known as Nga Kuia, Nga Koroua me Nga Manene o Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua is self-motivating. It has its own premises, plans its own activities which include Te Reo, mirimiri, taniko, harakeke, guest speakers, crafts and trips (e.g to gather pipi). A special feature is the involvement in helping other age groups like young mothers. Both men and women are involved on both a tutor and a student level. Our youngest tutor is 25 and the oldest is well into his eighties. The entire group gains great satisfaction and self-esteem through being involved in this initiative.
57. To date, the generic health services of Rangitāne o Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua have expanded to include smoking cessation, mental health, drug and alcohol, diabetes checks and monitoring, blood testing, childhood immunisations, Wellchild and physical activities.

My Rangitāne Identity

58. As a child, I remember my Dad and Ranginui Rautahi (they lived opposite each other in the pā) chanting whakapapa. It seemed they could sit for hours. I still can visualise and hear them and I remember many of the names.
59. When we were children we heard a lot about Rangitāne and hapū like Ngāti Pakapaka and Ngāti Mutuahi. However as we grew up there was confusion in terms of which tribe we belonged to. I remember years ago filling out the census and in the part where they would ask for your iwi there was no reference to Rangitāne, only to Ngāti Kahungunu.
60. It seemed that the Government was focused on setting up general tribal areas throughout New Zealand, for example, the Ikaroa region which extended from Mahia down to Wellington. Although there were a number of tribes within that rohe, the Ikaroa District Council produced maps of the entire region recording that the only iwi along the entire east coast was Ngāti Kahungunu, that included Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua. These types of maps that I have seen over the years have added to the confusion in terms of Rangitāne identity.
61. As a school teacher I have experienced many of our Māori children in the Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua area when asked to write down their hapū and iwi, actually using a Rangitāne hapū but Kahungunu as their tribe, for example: *ko Ngāti Pakapaka te hapū, ko Ngāti Kahungunu te iwi*. Although I felt it was not my job to correct them, I did feel sad for them because this is what they had been taught by their parents who were just as confused as their children.
62. It is incorrect to mix a hapū and an iwi in the way in which they were. I feel the Crown has to take some responsibility for this confusion. There have been generations of our people who have been subjected to inaccurate Government documents such as maps and censuses which have

contributed to the confusion that exists today, for example establishing committees such as the Ikaroa Council which would influence the make up of the iwi within that particular committee's authority.

63. I remember when my mother in law was attempting to succeed to interests in Māori land at Tahoraiti. She was a woman who always believed she was Ngāti Kahungunu only. When she went to the Māori Land Court and indicated to them that she wanted to succeed and outlined who she was and who the deceased person was, the Court advised her to go back and research her whakapapa in order for the succession application to be progressed. To her surprise, the whakapapa research that she undertook reflected that she had an almost pure Rangitāne whakapapa. In my experience, this has been the same for a number of our people.

The Future

64. During my school years I can remember our old people talking about issues relating to land loss and people like Nireaha Tāmaki, Aperahama Rautahi, Hori Herehere and Paora Rangiwhakaewa. However, I was really too young to take much notice of what they were talking about and what it all meant.
65. After hearing some of the evidence prepared over the last few years and presented in Dannevirke in May of this year it opened my eyes to what the korero that I have heard was all about.
66. I hope for the sake of our children that a Treaty settlement with the Crown will help clarify the Rangitāne identity issue and restore some of our massive land loss.
67. I am not sure that a monetary settlement is the only answer. It would certainly help but I would hope that whatever land that remains in the ownership of the Crown in Tamaki-Nui-a-Rua is returned to Rangitāne and that any money we receive from the settlement is used to buy back

land in our area. I can now see from years of living in the Dannevirke area that those Pākehā farmers who own large tracts of our land have been very successful in a commercial sense. It always makes me wonder how well off financially, spiritually and culturally our Rangitāne people would have been if we had retained a majority of our land.

68. Like many of the other people who have given evidence today, I have lived on ancestral land most of my life. I plan to live here until I die. What I would like to see during the years that I have left is for the world to know that the Rangitāne people are very much part of this landscape. The Crown must help achieve this goal.