

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF HONE TAIMONA ON BEHALF OF JESSIE MCVEAGH

Applications APP.003839.01.03 and APP.002667.01.04 - Opononi/Ōmāpere and Kohukohu Wastewater Treatment Plants

BEFORE THE NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of an application by FAR NORTH DISTRICT COUNCIL Resource Consent Applications APP.003839.01.03 and APP.002667.01.04 - Opononi/Ōmāpere and Kohukohu Wastewater Treatment Plants

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02 MAY 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Ko Hone Taimona toku ingoa, he kanohi ahau noo te Taumata Kaumatua o te Wahapu o Hokianga, otira noo nga hapu o Ngati Korokoro, Ngati Wharara me Te Pouka. He pou Taurahere ahau mo te hohipere i Rawene nei a Hauora Hokianga. Tena raa koutou katoa.

I contributed to the cultural and historical content of the document Kahukura, the Hapū Environmental Management Plan of a Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara me Te Poukā); Nga Haū o Te Wahapū o Te Hokianga nui a Kupe (2008) and am a past member of the Pakanae Hapu Management Committee.

I have been asked to provide expert evidence by Jessie McVeagh of Rāwene, Hokianga, on this matter.

1.3. I have a technical expertise with tikanga Tupuna, specifically regarding Te Wahapu o Hokianga and expertise in the nature of issues facing Ngāti Korokoro Ngāti Wharara me Te Poukā cultural values, rights and interests in relation to whenua, rangi, moana, taonga, taiao and the ao turoa.

I am confident to provide expert evidence to the hearings panel relating to cultural impact and risks for the purposes of this hearing.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

2.1. I have read the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses and I agree to comply with it. My evidence in this statement is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

2.2. I understand I have a duty of impartiality to provide evidence within my area of expertise to the hearings panel. I am an advocate for Te Wahapu o Hokianga Nui a Kupe, Ngati Korokoro Ngāti Wharara me Te Poukā and for Te Taiao o Hokianga nui tonu.

3. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

3.1. I am providing evidence in relation to the current and potential cultural impacts and associated risks of the proposed Wastewater Treatment Plants at Ōpononi-Ōmāpere and Kohukohu.

3.2. My evidence will focus on an overview of the relationship Ngati Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara me Te Poukā have with the Hokianga Harbour, and the cultural impacts and risks associated with the proposals.

3.3. Some mātauranga and tikanga relating to Hokianga history and association with the sites and wider area is tapu and I will not be presenting these in a public forum. Where my evidence does discuss things of a tapu nature, I have generalised this evidence so that it is appropriate for this forum.

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4. HAPU INTERESTS AND RIGHTS WITH THE AREA

4.1. Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Poukā are mana whenua of Te Wahapu o Hokianga the area encompassing the Opononi - Omapere WWTP, and have a shared responsibility for the Hokianga Harbour itself. The whenua and moana are our tribal heartland within a broader area of complex and overlapping ancestral interest and rights that extend over what are now known as Pākanae, Ōpononi, Kokohuia and Ōmāpere and the Hokianga Harbour.

The relationship Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Poukā have with our whenua and wai, including the Harbour known traditionally as Hokianga Nui a Kupe, Hokianga Whakapau Karakia and Te Puna i te Ao Marama is ancient. Our whakapapa connects us intrinsically to the whenua, the awa and moana and our tupuna. Our relationship is also based on continual occupation or ahi kā, and the maintenance of mana, tapu and mauri through the actions and practice of rangatiratanga, kaitiakitanga, whānaungatanga, wairuatanga and manaakitanga.

Our mātauranga (knowledge) of ourselves and our spiritual and physical environment, and the best ways to care for and be in the world were developed over centuries, are intrinsic to our tikanga (customs).

4.2. This relationship with our wai, moana and whenua are expressed in many ways including whakapapa (genealogy), purakau (traditions), waiata (songs), and tohu (placenames and landmarks). Our connection with the moana includes our practices of hauora, of rongoā (healing), of providing our whanau and manuhiri with kaimoana and ika, with our culture of waka ama and other watercraft, of recreation and bathing and through our actions in managing our taonga, wāhi tapu and the environment including participation in resource management matters.

4.3. Article II of Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides for rangatiratanga of hapū and iwi over our papakāinga, whenua, and taonga. The Te Paparahi o Te Raki report (Stage 1) through the Waitangi Tribunal states what we already know; our hapū never ceded sovereignty to the Crown. Our Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Poukā interests and rights in the area are expressed in the Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Poukā Hapū Environmental Management Plan referenced in the resource consent application for the Opononi/Ōmāpere Wastewater Treatment Plant. We assert that our rangatiratanga over our taonga places us as the decision makers over their use, modification, or destruction, and in this way, we have consistently challenged the authority of the Crown and the Courts to unilaterally make such decisions.

4.4. Our hapū relationship to the environment is borne from genealogy (whakapapa) and traditions. Our hapū lore of rules and regulations, the artery that makes us who we are, and the knowledge we hold, binds and actions the Hapū to ensure that our roles and responsibilities of Kaitiakitanga are upheld and undertaken. Our belief states: "Kotahi te hauora o nga mea katoa, kotahi ano te taura herehere o nga mea katoa, te iti me te rahi. Ko tona rite ki te toto e paihere nei i te whanau. Ko te tangata he muka kau no taua taura, tana e mea ai ki te taura, ka meatia ki a ia ano.'

"For every living thing is from one breath, a threaded rope entwining everything like the blood that binds a family. For man is just one strand of the rope, what he does to the rope, he does also to himself'.

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4.5. Ngati Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Pouka whakapapa, as with all our whānaunga and indeed all living natural things in Aotearoa, to ātua.

Io Matua

Nā lo ko Te Kore,

Nā Te Kore ko Te Kōwhao

Nā Te Kōwhao ko Te Anu

Nā Te Anu ko Te Pō

Nā Te Po ko Te Mauri

The basis of Māori relationship with our environment stems from the creation whakapapa. From this it is our belief all forms of life are related for all who descent from Rangi, the Sky Father and Papa-tūā-nuku the Earth Mother and their six sons, Tangaroa, Rongo-ma-tane, Haumia-tiketike, Tane Mahuta, Tawhiri-matea and Tūmataurangi being the Gods of the sea, fish and reptiles; of cultivated fruits of the earth, symbolized by kumara; uncultivated fruits of the earth; the forest and protector ' of birds and insects symbolized by a tree; the God who presides over wind and storms; father of men and God of war, respectively.

4.6. Ngati Korokoro, Ngati Wharara and Te Pouka recognise the ancestral fabric of the place we occupy. The land and waters are an irreplaceable treasure. Our beliefs state that

Ina te waiora o te Tangata

Ina te waiora o te Taiao

For healthy people

A healthy environment.

4.7. Our Hapū whakapapa is a chain of some thirty-two links back to the first ancestor Kupe, the first footprints in the sand at Te Pouahi, those generations ago. Much later Kupe left for his home island. In preparation for his journey, he climbed the sand hills above Te Pouahi to say his farewell to the land. First, he sacrificed his child Tuputupuwhenua in the spring of water as a fountain head for his descendants, then spoke these words of farewell:

"Hei konei ra e te puna o te ao marama, ka hoki nei ahau e kore ano e hokianga-nui-mai"

He summoned two taniwha Arai-te-uru and Niua and placed them on each side of the harbour as guardians, then summoned three great waves, Ngaru-nui, Ngaru-roa and Ngaru-pae-whenua to assist them, then departed. Kupe had put in place, the spiritual, heritage and traditional value base for the land.

Then came Nukutawhiti and Ruanui to build on the substance of their tupuna Kupe. Here is a short account of their journey.

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"Ko te waka nei ko Matahourua he mea whaka-totohu ki moana-rua (Te Ruanuku o nga taniwha i Hawaiki) i te hokinga o Kupe ki Hawaiki. I te wa i a Nukutawhiti, ka whakaaro ia, kia whakaritea te ohaki a tona tupuna a Kupe, kia haere mai, kia nohoia a Aotearoa. Ka whakamaanutia te waka nei, ka kitea he tino taimaha rawa i te roa e takoto ana i roto o te wai. Ka whakaaro a Nukutawhiti me hahau ano te waka nei kia mama ai te tere i te moana. Na reira ka whaoa tuaruatia te waka nei a Matahourua. E rua nga toki i whaoa ai, o Kanapa-ki-te-rangi, kouira. Ka tapaina te ingoa hou o te waka nei, ko Ngatoki-mata-whaorua mo te whaonga tuaruatanga. Ka taraia ano he waka hou mo tana tamaiti mo Ruanui, ka huaina ko Mamari ka haere tahi mai nga waka nei ki Hokianga.

The latter generations of their descendants, either occupied or located close to the places established by the earlier people, Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Poukā hapū by virtue of uninterrupted occupation and unbroken whakapapa are the ahi-ka(roa) and caretakers of this very significant place.

4.8. It is through these tūpuna, and many others, that Ngāti Korokoro have whakapapa and mana to the area and its resources. The unbroken whakapapa link back to Kupe, who established the first and to this day, unbroken ancestral occupation rights confer special customary rights and responsibilities on the hapū, that must be recognized and provided for.

Without question the hapū have kaitiakitanga, the guardianship and the responsibility role over all those taonga, on behalf of the whanau, and all Rāhiri descendants wherever they reside. The hapū rohe is the heartbeat of Ngapuhi, the rohe is important to other iwi and so too, to the nation. It is one of the founding places. of our country. Though the society has changed over the last six generations, the ancestral mantle woven into the land by past customary practices, and worn by all previous generations, is now worn by the hapū. It is through maintaining our wāhi tapu including urupā, and through efforts to maintain the wairua and mauri of the area, including the wai and the moana, through acts such as rāhui, that we can demonstrate our continued mana whenua.

4.9. In engagement with hapū, the marae is the main entrance, as this is where direct access to the Taumata and marae / hapū committees is made. There is only one doorway, and it is imperative that this main entranceway is utilized by Councils and other agencies to prevent any misunderstandings, negativity or disrespect. Marae protocols welcomes consultation, acknowledges, and respects engagement and is willing to build and strengthen relationships for the benefit of all.

4.10. Hokianga Harbour can be thought of as a living entity. Our tikanga is not to treat our ancestors, the awa and moana, like they are a playground or a passive thing from which to extract value but never to give anything back. Hokianga hapū still recite karakia prior to entering the moana just as our ancestors did, and traditionally would only enter with permission of the moana to collect kai, rongoā, or to undertake ceremonies.

Our tikanga is to respect the wai for both for its own intrinsic sake and as a source of nourishment and life for the people. Indeed, Hokianga Nui a Kupe, despite the hostility shown to it by colonialism, continues to provide 'services' to the people of Hokianga through kaimoana, recreation, healing, tourism, and our connection to each other.

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5. CULTURAL IMPACT AND RISK OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

5.1 Implicit in Māori culture and spiritual practice is the importance of acknowledging the element of tapu / sacredness that was established in the kinship of Rangī and Papa. All behaviour and practices of Māori today are restricted or guided by the ritual and ceremony necessary to access, use or remove any of the natural resources. It ensures Māori and people fit into the natural environment. Within the coastal area and ocean and harbour waters are our Hapū fisheries resources. There are renowned named ancient fishing places, which still provide bounty, although drastically reduced. The ancestral netting places, shellfish gathering places, coastal and breeding grounds still remain, however they need protection from all sources of contamination, both physical and spiritual.

5.2 Our Hapū ancestral world acknowledges the sacred importance of water and the flowing juices that water provides. Tradition states that any discharge of human waste of any form to water is a direct violation to the lineage, presence, and the regenerating powers of both Rangī-nui and Papatūānuku. To bypass the main primal life sustaining elements and go directly to the secondary younger elements breaks the life sustaining flow from that of the parents to the children. Genealogy states that the life force and role of all water bodies is to provide life, sustenance, health and to heal. Water has no long-term ability to absorb waste. The power and ability to absorb any human waste is a balance between Rangī-nui and Papatuanuku and human values of living. Water that goes through man changes the state, and at this point of flow, both Rangīnui and Papatūānuku must return to separate waste from water to allow the reciprocation of water to flow again. According to our tikanga, water that contains human waste must therefore go through the whenua (land).

5.3 The genealogy of the constant flow of water through these elements ensures the ancestral life force connection to the Creator, sky, earth and forest are held. Wai or Waiora is a significant word within our Hapu, a living word that encapsulating not only life but also death, the reciprocating cycle of life captured in one word, forever living. This traditional respect for water is still acknowledged today by many Hapū households who separate their water streams by using water from ancestral sources for drinking and associated practices and water collected from roof areas for washing, outside use and toilet use. There is a separation of what is tapu (highly acknowledged) and what is noa (common use). This practice of maintaining separation of tapu and noa is a part of our water conservation, environmental conservation, waterways conservation and traditional conservation in action.

5.4 The foreshore is one of our most important assets as spiritually and culturally it underpins the wellbeing of the whanau and hapū of our rohe and of the whanau and hapu of Ngapuhi, Te Rarawa and other iwi of Tai Tokerau. Our shoreline is imbued with ancestral values. The moana and its fishing grounds at the harbour inlet are as important to Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Poukā and their upper harbour hapū relatives as is the land. The sea was and continues to be our food basket and our middens testify of the range and quantity of kaimoana that sustained the Hapū. The moana provides whanau, marae and Hapū with a daily and weekly staple diet. This provision is extended to other Hapū and communities who also rely on the natural resources strictly for food

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purposes. In past times, tapu surrounded all aspects of fishing and likewise the success of all expeditions depended on the strict adherence to all associated tikanga. Conservation, preservation, and protection were a way of life and violation of tikanga could bring about the starvation of the whanau and hapū.

5.5 Today, signs are prevalent that Ranginui, Papatūānuku and Tangaroa are collapsing. Hapū have serious concerns regarding sedimentation, nutrient runoff and wastewater pollution from land-based activities coupled with overfishing, pilfering and increasing commercial and recreational activity that are destroying our marine ecosystems and habitats. The threat of starvation or a change in diet is more than likely if regeneration of kaimoana stocks and the preservation of the riparian ecosystem is not undertaken. All efforts must be taken to restore the mauri and life of the Hokianga, regardless of how small the volume of contaminants might be considered to be.

5.6 The Hapu, as Kaitiaki, consider water to be the ingredient by which all living organisms/life forms derive their existence. Each water body possesses its own mauri. Our whakapapa identifies that designated areas along the water course were set aside for certain activities. Our Tupuna recognized that all the above activities had the potential to degrade or extinguish the mauri of the water body which could result in offending the mana of those who held traditional rights and responsibilities over these areas.

5.7 As in past generations today the water ways are still heavily used by whanau, marae and hapū for food gathering, planting and replenishing, bathing and swimming, rongoā, healing and spiritual and cultural practices. The relationship with the Harbour is vital to the identity and wellbeing of Ngāti Korokoro – we have stated many times that human wastewater and the decline of the health of Hokianga Whakapau Karakia is an existential threat to the iwi, and that we cannot survive as a tribe without it. Our mana and wellbeing are tied to its fate. Our sacred obligation is to maintain the mauri of the Harbour so that it can survive into the future for generations to come.

5.8 Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara and Te Poukā have never consented to the continued use of waterways and especially the Hokianga to discharge human waste. Discharge to waterways and sea is culturally offensive and degrading. Direct discharge of contaminants into water, particularly sewerage and animal effluent is offensive and degrading to the traditional, cultural and spiritual values of the Hapū. To break tapu and could bring about harm to the mana and wairua of our hapū.

5.9 The Hapū mana Kaitiakitanga demands that how we work is in empathy with the environment and all resources. The environment through its own processes of mana Kaitiakitanga (the environment sustaining and providing for man) demands that we work, plan, give and sacrifice for today, tomorrow and for future sustainability, the emphasis is always on the future. To take without giving is not acceptable in anyone's culture. We have never relinquished our status as

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kaitiaki of the waters and waterways within our rohe and that we wish to be involved in any matters that affect them, as we need to ensure that risks are appropriately managed or eliminated, according to our tikanga.

6. REMEDY OR MITIGATION OF CULTURAL IMPACT

6.1 We recognise the need for a wastewater system to provide for the people on the existing reticulated sewage systems. However, as any human waste into our awa (rivers, streams), wai, moana or the Hokianga Harbour is absolutely unacceptable, regardless of being 'semi-treated', we categorically state that no sewage system that results in any discharge entering the Hokianga Harbour can be considered culturally acceptable.

6.2 The only acceptable remedy or mitigation is for sewage and/or any discharge of wastewater, regardless of the state of treatment, to go onto and through land. This system must also provide for the protection of mauri ora (life force) of our harbour and moana.

6.3 Hapū must be empowered to co-manage our shoreline with relevant agencies in a way that recognises the significant value as our hapu beginnings and acknowledges and protects the ancestral values located in and along the shore, waters and river mouths, and the existing natural characteristics of our rohe. Our hapū, as kaitiaki, must be involved at the highest level, according to our own tikanga, in seeking acceptable solutions for the wastewater and any associated activities.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 For the reasons set out in this evidence I consider the cultural risk of proceeding with the resource consent renewals based on the current information to be significant and not fully or adequately mitigated or contained.