

Iwi Chairs Forum, Whanganui

Thursday 3 May 2018; 8.35am

Hon Dame Tariana Turia

E rere kau mai te Awanui mai i te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa

Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au

It is our privilege and our responsibility, to come to this forum today to share with you our role as Te Pou Tupua.

In this shared presentation, I will traverse some of the back-story; the **origins and the intent of the role**.

Turama will speak about the **impact of Te Pou Tupua**: what it means for our relationships with the Crown and most important of all, what it means for the whānau, hapū and iwi at home.

It is just over a year ago that Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill, passed into law, establishing a new legal framework for the river.

It formalised the reality that Te Awa Tupua is an indivisible and living whole, from the mountains to the sea.

Te Awa Tupua was declared a legal person with all the rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a legal person.

Within the Act, the office of Te Pou Tupua is established to be the human face of Te Awa Tupua and to act in the name of Te Awa Tupua.

The reaction from some quarters was as to be expected. Hobson's Pledge thought the country had moved into the twilight zone; the ACT party labelled it legislative lunacy.

And yet it was simply a case of Parliament catching up with the essence of who the River's whānau, hapū and iwi are and the innate values they carry.

The enduring concept of Te Awa Tupua - the inseparability of people with their river – underpinned the desire to care, protect, manage and use the Whanganui River through the kawa and tikanga maintained by the descendants of Ruatipua and Paerangi and share that as the basis for recognition at law of the kawa and tikanga of the other whānau hapū and iwi of Te Awa Tupua.

This is not a new thing; a recent invention of the law.

You need go no further than the Whanganui River Report of 1999 – the basis of WAI 167 - to feel the weight of history and the presence of all those before who had brought the River claim: Hikaia Amohia who first brought the claim on 14 October 1990; Titi Tihu who was petitioner in 1927, Hekenui Whakarake who gave the evidence of loss to the Native Land Court.

In fact, the settlement brought the longest-running litigation in New Zealand history to an end. Whanganui iwi had fought for recognition of its relationship with the river since the 1870s; ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au.

Te Pou Tupua entrenches te mana o te awa; te mana o te iwi. The health and wellbeing of all hapū and iwi of Te Awa Tupua is intrinsically interconnected with the health and wellbeing of the Whanganui River.

From our earliest times, Te Awa Tupua has acted as a central artery for numerous kāinga and pā sites, urupā and other wāhi tapu throughout the length of the River.

The river formed the natural line of communication with the interior, as well as a natural barrier for movement north and south; in this one interconnected artery; tribal alliances were vital.

The river was the means of transport and food gathering, cleaning, recreation, socialising and spiritual sustenance.

The late Matiu Mareikura, explained it in this way:

And so we go back to the river and the river is the beginning, the beginning for our people from the mountain to the sea. It ties us together like the umbilical cord of the unborn child. Without that, it dies. Without that strand of life it has no meaning. The river is ultimately our mana. Our tapu, our ihi, our wehi, all these things make up what the river means to us. It is our life cord, not just because it's water, but because its sacred water to us.

Our people go to the river to cleanse themselves, they go to the river to pray and they go to the river to wash. They go to the river for everything. It all leads back to the river. And the river in return suffices all our needs.

Te Awa Tupua is about who we are and how we see ourselves, both as separate groups and as a collective whole, centred on the river.

We all have personal experience with the river for example when I was a child, our kai was plentiful, our food basket overflowing.

Hekenui Whakarake, a key witness before the 1950 royal commission, listed īnanga, ngaore, paneroro, papanuku, kakahi, pīharau, tunariki and tunarere. He talked about 18 species of

native freshwater fish as well as koura, freshwater shrimp and freshwater mussels. We had at least 22 names for different types of eels; some 350 pā tuna in the stretch from Raorikia to Whakapapa before 1890 and 92 pā's for pīharau. The awa is also abundant with kaitiaki: Tutaeporoporo is perhaps the best known, but also Tutangatakinō, Te Maru, Mimi and others.

When Turama and I were approached to be Te Pou Tupua we were under no illusion that we were to represent the Crown or indeed to represent the iwi – ours is a singular role to enable the intent of Te Awa Tupua to speak for itself; and in doing so to return to the optimum conditions for abundance in all respects.

In our very being, this intent conditions the Crown and all communities to a different voice.

Te Pou Tupua speaks as Te Awa Tupua. Both the gravitas and potential of the role is huge, but the impact can only be realised through the river's communities and particularly the hapū and iwi of te Awa Tupua whose innate relationship is now legally entrenched in the definition of the river.

Te Awa Tupua exists to 'change the lens' to the one we all should have been using since 1840 to view the river through.

We absolutely see the role of te Pou Tupua is to condition the crown, local government and communities to that 'changed lens'.

Turama is going to speak more about how that works in practice.

Finally, we want to make an observation about one of the most pivotal aspects of Te Awa Tupua and that is kotahitanga. It

surprised us in looking over the Iwi Chairs form and function paper to see the values of rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, tikanga – yet kotahitanga is absent.

If we consider the Rūnanga rules imposed on all iwi by the Crown in 1989, and enacted in the Rūnanga Iwi Act of 1990, it took away the mana and autonomy of whānau, hapū and iwi. That legislation centralised the power in the hands of a few iwi members, kept whānau ignorant of what occurred between the Crown and the corporate structure, and replaced our whānau and hapū tikanga with Crown values and procedures.

What Te Awa Tupua requires is for a return to our model based on kawa and tikanga including marae tikanga, mehemea ka pai ngā mahi a muri, ka pai anō ngā mahi a mua.

For Te Awa Tupua to work, we as Te Pou Tupua need to understand that leadership best resides with and within the whānau, hapū and iwi of the River based on the innate values that are expressed by those whānau, hapū and iwi on a daily basis. In demonstrating Kotahitanga around these innate values, the innate values of Te Awa Tupua, the Crown and all other communities become beholden to them. Of course, the Te Awa Tupua legislation helps but the real strength and power of Te Awa Tupua is the ability for all whānau, hapū and iwi to share a common set of Te Awa Tupua values – called Tupua Te Kawa. Focus is on open communication in upholding these common values, that the wellbeing of the whole through Te Awa Tupua is more important than that of individuals.

That will require all whānau, hapū and iwi to prioritise unity over tribal boundaries; to promote dialogue and consensus decision-making; to utilise the strengths of the collective; to give effect to

the spirit and intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi; to promote trust and faith in our whānau, hapū and iwi, rather than isolate decision-making to multiple Boards and Executives on our behalf.

As with Te Awa Tupua, Māoridom's greatest strength is its collective voice. For over a hundred and seventy years no matter the forum iwi and Māori have strived to voice the same aspirations to achieve collective benefits –there is no other way.

With this in mind, might we consider for a moment one example of the challenge to maintaining a collective voice. There are two particular issues about the way in which Whānau Ora outcomes have recently been rewritten for the purposes of the Whānau Ora Review terms of reference:

In the terms, two of seven Whānau Ora goals have been rewritten:

- **The fourth goal – Whānau confidently participating in te ao Māori** has been reduced to 'confident in language and culture'
- **The seventh goal – Whānau are responsible stewards of their natural and living environment** has changed the focus on stewardship to instead 'responding'.

This completely changes the nature of the aspiration from being proactive and taking responsibility; living up to our obligations as guardians, to instead just reacting after the event.

Who has the audacity to change your voice; to rewrite your words? When did you abdicate your right and responsibility to describe the world you want for your whānau to a bureaucrat on Lambton Quay?

When you speak with one voice; when you come together as one you stand up for the things that matter; the ways you define the

world; the priorities that you have created for the best interests of all whānau, hapū and iwi and the mokopuna to come.

Though Te Pou Tupua has a specific context, our role is essentially no different to the role you all play in today's Kotahitanga context of the Iwi Chairs Forum. In the same vein our role is to condition the Crown and all others to the true voice of Te Awa Tupua through its whānau, hapū and iwi. You too have that responsibility. We trust you will exercise it.

Mā te kotahitanga ka whai kaha ai tātou

In unity we will find strength

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Turama Hawira

In speaking to you today of the impact of Te Awa Tupua, and more specifically our singular role as Te Pou Tupua, I am very conscious of the imprint of our tupuna, and in particular Koro Titi Tihu.

Koro Titi; a mokopuna of the great prophet Te Kere Ngataierua of Tawata, left for us all a legacy of the intimate association between our spiritual world and the prophecies that gave rise to our identity as Whanganui.

In 1980, he told the Māori Affairs Select Committee that the taniwha are a local embodiment of the spirit of the river people.

As a child of eight, Koro Titi's mother required him to row upstream to Ohura to fetch rongoa for his uncle who was ailing. Anxious about his journey in the dark, the young boy headed off only to encounter the kaitiaki, Tutangatakino with *“two great eyes like the signal lamps on the big Pakeha fireboats”*. Rather than being consumed, as Titi expected, Tutangatakino instead guided him safely to the next village.

How then does this world view – this notion that we see ourselves and the kaitiaki as the traditional river guardians – influence and impact upon our relationships with all those who have interests in the Whanganui River catchment?

I want to carry on the korero from where Aunty Tari left off, to understand the implications of the Pou Tupua role as providing an opportunity for all iwi to leverage off; to continue to strategise and mobilise for your voice; our voice; to prevail.

The teachings of our tupuna were consistent: kauaka e kōrero mō te awa, engari kōrero ki te awa.

Uncle Tahu used to tell us “ko au te taupā kīhai i puāwai aku moemoeā”.

When some thirty years ago, he along with Uncle Archie, Uncle Mat, and others started creating the succession plan that would evolve into our annual tribal hikoi, Te Tira Hoe Waka, his view was that we needed to seek our own solutions, to know always that our spiritual connection with our awa was our greatest resource in reaching our goals.

Conversely our greatest barrier in fulfilling our aspirations would be to turn away from the essence of who we are.

I want to pick up from Aunty’s korero on kotahitanga.

Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill refers to Whanganui iwi as the collective group comprising every individual descended from Ruatipua, Paerangi and Haunui-ā-Pāpārangi – all those who collectively exercise customary rights and responsibilities in respect of the Whanganui River.

Our appointments as Pou Tupua came, then, from dialogue and mutual agreement from those iwi with interests in the Whanganui River catchment: Whanganui, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Rereahu, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Ruanui and Ngā Rauru Kītahi.

In doing so te Awa Tupua provides opportunity for all to contribute to a collective outcome

These eight iwi will strategise and work together and in doing so enhance the mana of all of those iwi

Support and cooperation amongst all our iwi is vital in order for te Pou Tupua to speak confidently as te Awa Tupua and to achieve the necessary shift in thinking and perspective locally and nationally.

How we do this is inspired by Tupuna Te Kawa ; the intrinsic values that represent Te Awa Tupua.

Ko Te Kawa Tuatahi : Ko te awa te mātāpuna o te ora.

The River is our source of spiritual and physical sustenance, that supports and sustains the life and natural resources through the length of the river and the people who trace back descent to some 143 marae that were located along the awa.

Ko te Kawa Tuarua

E rere kau mai i te awa nui mai i te kāhui maunga ki Tangaroa

The concept of indivisibility – a living whole from the mountains to the sea.

Ko Te Kawa Tuatoru : ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au.

Our inalienable connection with and responsibility to the health and wellbeing of te awa tupua.

Ko Te Kawa Tuawhā : Ngā manga iti, ngā manga nui e honohono kau ana, ka tupu hei Awa Tupua; the small and large streams that flow into one another form one river.

Te Awa Tupua is comprised of many elements and communities; working collaboratively is intrinsically connected to the common purpose.

What our olds used to enforce in us is the notion that if you respect the river and treat it well it will in turn look after you.

Uncle Archie was staunch in his challenges to us – his vision was that our future was intricately bonded to both the mana of Te Awa Tupua and the mana of all its iwi.

Te Pou Tupua has the obligation to live up to this thinking – and in doing so to engage actively with the iwi, hapū and communities of the Whanganui River, local government and the other groups as part of its work.

The wisdom of Uncle Hikaia Amohia bears remembering. His words also informed the Tribunal report:

For our people, ihi, tapu and mana go together. Each one is dependent upon the others. An interference or breach of one affects the rest.

Any interference with nature including the river breaks the law of tapu, breaks the ihi or sacred affinity of our Maori people with the river, and reduces the mana and soul of the Whānganui River to what it is becoming regarded today to being nothing more than a product for commercialisation, or a product for purely aesthetic appreciation. The Whanganui River is far more than that.

Physical pollution of the Whanganui River affects its soul, its wairua, its mana and through the sacred affinity of this sacred space to our people, affects us mentally, physically and spiritually. When you interfere with the flow of the river you are interfering with nature. Carried out intentionally you interfere with tapu.

Our focus is an overarching duty to act in the interests of the Whanganui River in order to facilitate and promote integrated catchment-wide management of the Whanganui River. Part of our responsibilities include administering Te Korotete, a \$30 million contestable fund to support the environmental enhancement of Te Awa Tupua.

But importantly, Te Pou Tupua can also advise and make recommendations to agencies and bodies with administrative responsibilities over the Whanganui River; to obtain and share information in relation to the Whanganui River; and develop a set of high level River Values which all must adhere to.

What it means in practical terms is that when we think about the river we think about it as a whole rather than just our responsibility as a district council or regional council or any other body, iwi or hapu. We all have interest in this river and we need to work together; to have consideration of the river's status and the four kawa when making decisions.

It reaches wider than just environmental considerations. It could be about assessing curriculum across our local schools; creating a landscape of learning which acknowledges intangible ideas as well as physical.

Whether it is in local planning, in management; in policy and regulation the principles, values, kawa, tikanga and maatauranga of Whanganui Iwi are now intimately involved.

But it is only in the presence of a collective duty of care from its iwi can te Pou Tupua be given voice.

It is about Whaiwahitanga through Whanganuitanga. Knowing that the whole is greater than its parts; reinforcing the principle of manaakitanga, providing opportunities for all our whanau to grow in experience and knowledge.

We know that a divided community loses its vitality and potential to flourish.

Back in 1979, one of our tribal leaders, Dr Whakaari Rangitākūkū Metekingi was quoted in He Mātāpuna by the New Zealand Planning Council; *'Rapua te huarahi whānui hei ara whakapiri i nga iwi e rua i runga i te whakaaro kotahi.*

His advice for future generations was to seek the broad highway that will unite us towards a common goal.

Our Nanny Nui – Te Manawanui Pauro of Nga Paerangi gave further clarity to this vision through her kupu : korowaitia te puna waiora hei oranga motuhake mō te iwi : let us always immerse ourselves in working towards a vision of wellness and wellbeing for our whanau as the driving force in our lives.

This beautiful wise kuia was a valuable link to all our pa along the river, and contributed much valuable evidence for the Waitangi Tribunal claims

Until the ripe old age of 103; she nurtured our souls with her knowledge of ancient karakia; she taught us about rongoa and maara kai, she helped to set up our iwi radio AWA FM; she was instrumental in establishing our health authority, Te Oranganui in the early 1990s.

Every year, no matter how frail, she would join us on the Tira, modelling that connectivity with our waterways and lands and our responsibility to care for the wellbeing of our river and our people.

And so as you gather today to prepare yourselves for the presentations and politicians alike, be clear that with you also are those who watch over us and wait for their legacy to be learnt; that the multitudes of strands and tributaries come together as one voice; he muka nā te taurawhiri o Hinengākau.

Our greatest challenge is not so much about enabling te awa tupua to speak for itself – that will be as it always been – a given for who we are.

Our greatest challenge is instead in conditioning the Crown to respect a different voice than their own; and to be brave in the uptake of this new opportunity afforded us all; to truly be self-determining; to unite with one purpose in mind; the health and wellbeing of all that we are; to honour and protect our whakapapa; our whenua; our whanau.