

IN THE MATTER OF The Treaty of
Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Claims by
HUHURERE
TUKUKINO and
OTHERS known
as the HAURAKI
CLAIMS

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF AMY COOPER ON
BEHALF OF THE CLAIMANTS**

My name is Amy Dorothy Cooper and I reside at Turua. I am of Ngati Hauauru hapu of 'Ngati Maru', which is my principal iwi. I am a great grand-daughter of "Meremana Konui" whom our whanau now derive our name from, and who in his time was the tohunga for our hapu.

Being Ngati Maru means I also whakapapa to the other iwi and related iwi of 'Marutuahu'. My whakapapa from Marutuahu is as follows:

Marutuahu = Hineuranga

Te Ngako

Kahurautao

Rautao
Hape
Hauauru
Te Konui
Te Riroi
Meremana Konui
Waimanuka Meremana
Lena Meremana
Myself.

3. I was born in Thames but spent my youth in Waitakaruru. When my mother returned to live in Thames I remained with my father at Waitakaruru. My father was of Irish descent so we didn't speak or learn things Maori as children. My mother very rarely spoke Maori to her children when I was young and things Maori seemed to occur out of our range. It was only in her old age that she spoke Maori and referred to Maori tikanga more frequently.
4. She feared we would never succeed if we followed our Maori side. To her it was more practical to embrace the Pakeha world as opposed to the Maori world to obtain the best possible advantage for oneself. You must remember that in her time public attitude towards all things Maori, other than land of course, was frowned upon by non-Maori.
5. I am regretful now that I cannot speak my native tongue. It is a very sad thing for me, however I am changing this situation by attending night class at the Matai Whetu mara to learn 'te reo' the language of my Ngati Maru ancestors.
6. While I was growing up in Waitakaruru my heart always pulled me back to the principle stronghold of my whanau in Thames. I returned to Thames after I had married. Returning home has been the best thing

I have ever done. Things were different in Thames and it took me a little to fully accept my Maori side again. This wasn't easy because there were many minor things about me that were very Pakeha because of my upbringing, however, I always knew that I belonged and had to return to the lands of my tupuna.

7. My mother was very fussy when it came to the management of our health. As children if we coughed we were made to have an x-ray and examination. We thought this was funny as children at that time, however we soon learned her caution was due to the fact that our whanau and extended whanau lost many lives to 'consumption', or as many commonly known, 'tuberculosis'.
8. My mother lost 8 brothers and sisters to tuberculosis, and my grandmother, while trying as best she could to save her 8 children eventually died herself of tuberculosis. My mother was very fearful for the safety of her own children concerning tuberculosis because she had witnessed its affects first hand thus the reason for her caution and those x-rays.
9. As I reflect in hindsight of our family fear concerning our health, I remember all the injections and inoculations that we were made to have. My father seemed to not want to miss out on anything regarding his children's health. The schools also, to their credit, tried to inoculate all the kids, however the way they undertook the task regarding Maori reflected their unfriendly attitude toward us.
10. The closest thing to a marae our whanau had was our mum's whare at Parawai in Thames. It was called 'the Kauri'. Nearby is an underground spring, and other waterways where we still collect food, even today. My mother bought in bulk and always stored as much food as she could. She always had bags of flour, sugar and other things she kept in the storeroom. My mother wanted food in her

cupboards at all times, regardless. I think this was because she had grown up quite poor and didn't want us to be ever without food.

11. Also close by is the 'Waiwhakaurunga' or Kauaeranga River. I know our whanau relied heavily on that river as a source of food. It is still a source today however, it is not as plentiful as it was in yester-year. My uncle has told me when he was a boy, how he used to split and pawhara (dry) eels, herrings, kahawai, mullet and sharks. My mother always said the best kai for our whanau was fish. Our vegetables came from our garden.
12. When I was growing up we never really had a proper marae that we could call our own. When I returned to Thames there was a need for a marae. Our people often spoke of 'Hotunui', the wharenui that is on loan, in the Auckland Museum. I was pleased when others began talking about a proper marae complex being constructed. I offered to help in any way I could.
13. And so begins another major story in my life. That of the Matai Whetu marae. It took a lot of work and fundraising from a lot of people working in concert. Ngati Maru people and non-Ngati Maru people had to put in a tremendous amount of time and effort. I am proud to say I helped in this project and am now a trustee of the marae.
14. Today many activities are undertaken at the Matai Whetu. On the complex is our Kohanga Reo and I see our children learning things Maori that was never available for myself when I was their age. I try and help, and learn as much as I can. When I see these things I never ever regret coming home.

Kia ora koutou.