

Introduction

1. My name is Samson Hamahona Te Whata, my wife is Debbie, and our children are Aroha, who is 16 years of age, Miriama, 13, Tipene, 10, and Rangimarie, 8. My *Tipuna* is from Ngati Porou and settled in Ngapuhi. My family and I are now based in Dubbo, New South Wales, Australia.
2. I am a director and CEO of Shearpak 2000 (Australia) Pty Ltd, which provides training to the wool industry in Australia.
3. My relationship with the Evans *whanau* has developed over many years. It began when we were neighbours on the Back Ormond Road in Gisborne, and has continued through our affiliation together in the wool industry. We are also *whanau* through our *Tipuna*.

Farm projects prior to 1987

4. Before going to live in Waiheke in 1987 my family and I had been involved in a contracting business in Gisborne doing shearing, fencing, and both native and pine forestry work. In our less busy times, we would travel as a team to Waiheke to stay with George and his *whanau*, and carry out tasks set by George, relative to our expertise.

In transit

5. In 1987 my family and I were in transit, about to go to Australia to take up a job offer. However, I recognised that George needed a hand on the farm at Waiheke. The pressure of Bev's illness and then death, Richard's emotional state as a result of his mother's demise and rural business turmoil, and all the political unrest involving the Waiheke property, made life for George and the *whanau* very distressing, to say the least.
6. We decided to go to Waiheke to help out on a full-time basis. I was going to manage the block.

Arrival at Waiheke Farm

7. My family and I arrived in February or March in 1987, to find that the property was completely bare - the ground was cracked and dry. It had been a hot summer, but we were still surprised to see how dry the whole island was. All the livestock was there with only the barest of feed, and it was a good thing that we had the silage and hay to feed the stock.

Farm management

8. The priority was to adopt a strategic plan to keep the livestock in good condition, to carry them through the dry time. This was achieved by keeping the sheep and goats working on the larger area and the younger sheep running beside the young heifers, which were fed with hay and silage. The breeding cows were run on their own.
9. This process was continued until the winter rains were able to nourish and stimulate growth. We then confined the stock into smaller areas to allow growth to progress over the wider pastures. A successful kidding, lambing and calving was carried out by the end of September. All the stock was in great condition. The animals were kept in their main age groups. We had grass blowing in the wind, neighbours often commented on how the place looked so well, with so much feed.
10. George would be with us over the weekends to assist us with the extra hand needed. But the normal on-farm maintenance was carried out under stressful conditions. I knew George was having some financial difficulties, but I had no real idea how serious they were. At one stage people were threatening to come and take the tractor, and we would've had no way of getting the feed out.
11. People from the Department of Maori Affairs, including Mike Davis and Dixon Wright, came out to visit the farm - we entertained them there a number of times. I thought they were just doing regular

inspections, I didn't realise they were preparing to get rid of us.

Eviction Day - 16 November 1987

12. The morning of the re-entry, 16 November, was disturbing and humiliating for me and my family. We had no idea what was happening. Mike Davis led the thing. He came in with a musterer, and a few other people showed up later that morning. Davis was really friendly and handed me the notice of re-entry. I didn't even realise how sinister the piece of paper was -I didn't really know about the political implications of the whole Waiheke business, I was just there to manage the farming aspects of it. So when Davis and the others arrived, I was led to believe it was just a normal operation, nothing out of the ordinary.
13. I was asked to point out where the stock were paddocked so the musterer could get a head count. The ewes and lambs were run through together, meaning that the adults were counted but the lambs were not counted. The same method was used for the cattle, meaning the breeding cows were counted but the calves at foot, which I was going to wean over the next week, were not counted. I noticed that the head musterer didn't view all the different ages, in particular the 18-month cattle and calves. Also, there was no checking in the neighbours' properties for strays.
14. I wasn't experienced in proper tallying, though, and they were experienced musterers, so I didn't question them. Also, I thought they were just doing a rough count for the Department's records.
15. I called George in Mangakino and told him the people were there, and when he arrived he explained the seriousness of the situation to me. I couldn't understand how the Crown could come onto an operation that was working well, and take it over without prior warning.

16. We had to vacate the farm as soon as possible. Getting all the furniture off the island was no easy task under the circumstances. Debbie was expecting our second child, and finding another home for us was difficult, to say the least. George had to find a home for my family and me in Mangakino.

Why the claim is important to us

17. George and his *whanau* have suffered a great injustice. This must be put right, to recognise the fact that the Evans *whanau* has made a great contribution to all of Maoridom, and to the country in general.
18. George has the knowledge and the skills to bridge the gap between Maori and the global farming economy - to take the *Kiko*, the very marrow, the substance of Maori *tikanga*, and apply it in the world of agriculture.
19. If only Maori could have harnessed George's expertise, we would be in a stronger position today. But he has had to spend so many years fighting this case and fighting off his creditors - that time has been lost which could've been spent so much more productively for all Maori.

DATED THIS

DAY OF

2001

SAMSON HAMA HONA TE WHATA