

**BEFORE THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL
TE ROOPU WHAKAMANA I TE
TIRITI O WAITANGI**

WAI 970

IN THE MATTER of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER of the Hauraki Inquiry District

AND

IN THE MATTER of a claim by **Florence Te Paea Watene Gurnick; Mita Eparaima Watene; Billy Wi Te Koha Williams; Bill Wiremu Te Moananui; Ropata Te Wharetoitoi Rare; Harata McCaskill Williams; Toi Te Akeake and Aporo Hikitapua Reedy** on behalf of themselves and all the descendant whanau and hapu and the constituent whanau and hapu of the ancestor **TAMATEPO** of the **MARUTUAHU TRIBAL CONFEDERATION**

**STATEMENT OF BILLY WI WILLIAMS
IN SUPPORT OF WAI 970 CLAIM
Dated 10 June 2002**

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1. My name is Billy Wi Williams. I live at the Coromandel. I will tell you the history of Ngati Rongo-U and my hapu of Te Patutatahi as passed down to me by my elders and Rehara Kapane.
2. Rehara lived with us at Papa Aroha after Hohepa Kapene died in 1915. Rehara lived in a traditional whare and it was the children's favourite place to sleep, the warmest house in our settlement. So at night we would listen to Rehara and our parents as they talked of the time before the pakeha and all the 2000 and people were one. They talked of our Tipuna for Ngati Rongo-U, Rongo mai, whose urupa is at Whakatete Bay, and we sang waiata for him.
3. They talked of puwha and his conquests and the battles he and paeke fought together and one particular battle they fought at Papa Aroha, that gave us the whenua we lived on then.
4. They talked of Te Rakau and his wife Ruawhanake of Ngati Tai who came from Aotea Island as this line gave us our hapu name, of Te Patutatahi, the (sea pounding on the beach). The surf can still be heard today from our old pa site at Poihakena.
5. They sang waiata to them, they talked of the other Hapu of Ngati Rongo-U. Ngati Naunau-Ngati Kawe Te iringahau, Ngati Pu. Te Iringahau shared whenua with us at Papa Aroha, Waiaro and Poihakena at the cape, these two Hapu of Ngati Rongo-U Te Iringahau and Te Patutatahi are still close through blood lines to this day.
6. They talked of Te Moho and Paturekereke's marriage's to Nga Puhi, of Pomare hapu, after the Kaikohi pa war, these marriage's help set a peace between Ngati Rongo-U and Nga Puhi for many year's and how Kanihi gifted Tukutuku to Te Moho for his part in the peace.
7. These stories of Ngati Rongo-U were told to me as a child, and as I grew into adulthood.
8. These stories have been with me all my life. I lived and worked my early years among my people's pa, urupa, reserve land, and Wahitapu. These place's are still here. You can see them clearly, if only you would open your eye's, as clearly as I can when I close my eye's and see it in my heart.

9. For my part in this narrative I have lived in Hauraki and Auckland. I now reside in Coromandel. I am 93 years old. Rehara Kapene was living in Hauraki at the time the treaty of Waitangi was signed. At Papa Aroha-Waiaro and Poihakene these lands were their lands until the crown cast their eye's upon them in the 1870's. This was the beginning of the end of the Tangata whenua of Ngati Rongo-U. Today our people without our whenua are landless strangers in a strange land with a strange name, New Zealand.

10. DESCRIBING ACTIONS OF CROWN LAND AGENTS

Acquiring land through incurred survey cost by having to prove ownership of their own land.

11. Crown land agents letter to their bosses saying how cheap they could purchase particular blocks for, as they already had 2 or 3 of the owners on their debt. By what means, they do not say.

12. Crown land agents duplicity in knowingly purchasing native reserves when it suited them, even though they know it was illegal under the Maori Land Act, when in other cases owners of native reserves who wanted to sell were told it was against the law! These reserves just happened to be land locked blocks already ceded to the crown.

13. The initial land shortages these Crown acquisitions caused were somewhat alleviated by the Flu Epidemic of the 1880's which was introduced accidentally by the Pakeha to New Zealand.

14. So, if to decimate is to kill 1 in every 10, this flu killed 7 in every 10 in the Northern Hauraki.Hapus. So would this be to separate? This Epidemic certainly did - to our people from their land and life!

15. The Crown as our treaty partner, acted abysmally here. In its haste to acquire these lands and to rip a quick profit from it, they stripped the Kauai, Rimu, Totara and gold from its earth. The motivation was pure greed. These actions *were* not those of a Treaty partner, but those of a manipulative profit-driven band of entrepreneurs who hid behind the thin veil of legality the Crown Land Acts offered them.

16. The Crown changed these land acts 5 times when barriers arose in their drive to acquire more land.

17. These actions by the Crown and its agents still echo to this very day. Once a vibrant and diverse culture, who by any world standards were wealthy, now come a distant second to their treaty partners the Pakeha, in health education, housing and economic growth.
18. These inequities with our treaty partners must be addressed.
19. Firstly by the return of our land, the stripping of which left our people unable to compete economically and socially with our partners. The land acquired by the Crown is around 98% of all Hauraki's land.
20. No offer of compensation can ever right the wrongs we have endured at the hands of the Crown, but in the words of a great man, even the long journey begins with the first step.
21. So Whanau, leave the Whare door open and a fire burning to guide the way as an old friend, one we haven't seen for 140 years, may come and stay awhile at the Whare of Tamatepo.
22. Hush children! Is that Wikitorias footsteps I hear outside, or just the wind in the ToiToi bushes.

BILLY WI WILLIAMS

DATED: