

IN THE MATTER

of the Treaty of
Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER

of Remehio TE
MAUNGA
MANGAKAHIA of
Whangapoua and on
behalf of descendants
and whanau members
of HAMIORA
MANGAKAHIA

Brief of Evidence of Cheryl Dawn Darling

1. My name is Cheryl Dawn Darling. I am 50 and I was born 9th of October, 1949. I was born in Palmerston North. My birth mother is Dawn Smith, a daughter of Pareake Bright. When my sister Kaye and I got older, we would spend our school holidays with her. She later married and then lived up north where she had eight children. However, my younger sister Kaye and I were brought up with my grandparents. They were Pareake Bright (nee Mangakahia) and Bert Bright - they were our Mum and Dad. Pareake, my grandmother, was the daughter of Hamiora Whakakoro and Mere Karaka Powhiri Mangakahia. Hamiora Whakakoro was the eldest son of Hamiora Mangakahia and Pareake Ngapo.

2. I must have been a baby when I moved in with my grandparents. We took on the name Bright, the name of my grandfather Bert Bright. We lived at Whangapoua in the Bright homestead on the block of land that was later sold to Bert Denize. In September 1957 we moved to Coromandel, I was seven, nearly eight. Since then I have always lived in Coromandel.

3. I can remember our house being small. There was a little veranda at the front. The kitchen, lounge, and dining room area was one room with a wood fire stove. There was a closed in veranda and three bedrooms. Finally there off the main room with a little porch out the back, and then there was a wash house and bathroom together. There was no power at the house. We would light the copper to heat hot water to have a bath in. We had tank water and there was also the creek. The water

Paragraph 1

My name is Cheryl Dawn Darling. I am 50 and I was born on 9th October 1949 in Palmerston North. My birth mother is Dawn Smith, eldest daughter of Pareake Bright (Mangakahia) and Bertram Bright. Pareake was the daughter of Hamiora Whakakoro Mangakahia and Mere Karaka Powhiro. Hamiora Whakakoro was the eldest son of Hamiora Mangakahia and Pareake Ngapo. My younger sister Kaye and I, were brought up by our grandparents - Pareake and Bert Bright. They were our mum and Dad. Dawn married and moved to Northland where she raised a family of eight children - my brother and sisters. When Kaye and I were growing up we would spend school holidays with Dawn and our brothers and sisters as often as we could.

was very clean. I lived with Mum and Dad, Kay and Hinemoa our Auntie. She is five to six years older than me.

Mahi Kai (Food Gathering and Preparation)

4. We used to spend a lot of time going down to the beach, collecting shellfish. Mum had kete because she used to make them. We always had kits when we were gathering shellfish.

5. We would go fishing with Mum and Dad at Morepork Gulley. At this end is Raukawa. At this end we would also get pipi.

6. The northern end was New Chums. We would go there to get kinas, pauas, mussels and to collect around the rocks the sea anemone - koterotero. Koterotero are like a flower and they are found underneath the rocks. You need a knife to get them because as soon as you touch them they close up. They are quite tricky to get at. Mum would collect them. They were stuck to rocks in sandy pools. Mum would make soup out of them with milk - it was really nice.

7. Approximately 200 meters from our house was a creek called the Pungapunga stream and we would swim down there. I do not like eels, because I was down there one night and I got bitten by one.

8. I remember finding fresh water koura in the other streams near our house.

Whangapoua

9. We shared Whangapoua with Reg and Cathy Mangakahia and their children. I can also remember Reg's father, Waipapa living with them. In the big house were Bunty Browne, his wife and their 10 or so children. The Denize family lived in the big homestead. We all went to school together.

10. There were two old men working the last remaining mill at Whangapoua. They were called the Flynn brothers. I think they lived in one of Bert Denize's baches down by the sea. The mill was operating in

the 1950s near our house. I have a photo of the mill that I took after it closed.

11. There was the punga house up past the mill. I can remember Mum's sister Auntie Pano lived in it for a while. We would go and visit her there.

12. At Christmas time there were lots of campers on the Denize's land. We had contact with them even though they were not family members. There was one family that came camping who had a daughter that was a year or two older than Kay and I. They always bought clothes down for Kay and I right up until we were teenagers. Even when we moved to Coromandel, they would come and visit us, bring us clothes.

13. My family was definitely not well off- there was always a struggle to make ends meet. Our life was hard and the health profile of my family illustrate this. I would often hear Mum talking about her ancestors to the older ones. Most of her brothers died very young. Some of these children had TB. Out of 13 children in her family only her, Ruka and Auntie Pano survived. I had rheumatic fever as a child and I ended up in the hospital when I was about nine or ten. I can also remember visiting my auntie in hospital when she developed TB. Mum and Dad's health was a significant factor in our move to live in Coromandel.

14. But at Whangapoua we had all the resources of food. It was easier to live there, than in Coromandel where we did not have access to the beach. When we moved to Coromandel, Kay and I on occasion would walk over the hill about four kilometres just to get kaimoana.

15. I can remember Dad had a big vegetable garden at Whangapoua. He also had milking cows. I can remember Mum making butter out of the cream. We always helped Mum and Dad in the gardens and the other jobs around te place.

16. There is still a section on the Denize's land that belongs to the Brights - but I understand it has never been succeeded to. It is approximately 1/4 of an acre. The Denize's have always let us on to their lands. I think the Denize family all know that the section belongs to us. It was the main entrance to get into our old homestead - you actually had to go across the section.

Schooling

17. When I first started school at 5 we would walk about two kilometres and catch the school bus to Te Rerenga where the school was.

18. We left Whangapoua when I was 7 and I completed primary and secondary school in Coromandel. I obtained School Certificate and I finished in the 6th Form.

Decline At Whangapoua

19. The numbers of people that go to Whangapoua swell every year creating population stresses. When we were children most of the campers would go to the Denize's place - about two or three hundred there. Then some family members started sub-dividing the sand hills - that made quite an impact on the number of people going there. Thousands of people go there in the summer now. We do not go because it is so crowded and the roads are so busy at this time of year.

20. From the time that I was seven until the end of high school, I noticed many changes in Whangapoua. The sand hills were developed and baches built - before then there were rolling sand hills and there was rabbit's tail grass. Near Raukawa where the memorial is new I can remember seeing bones and I was told it was a sacred burial ground. Much of those sand dunes were levelled off to make way for baches. There was a road put down the middle and many buildings were built over the top of that site.

21. Due to over-fishing there was a decline in paua and kina - I do not even go looking for them now. There have been periods when you could not get them or they were just too small. We would get them around New Chums. I can remember looking there and we would be lucky to find anything. There are still lots of pipi though. You can fish down Morepork Gulley but it is not as plentiful as when we were young children fishing there. We would always get something to eat then, especially fish.

Importance of the Whanau Lands

22. After we moved to Coromandel and whenever we could we would go to Whangapoua. We looked forward to going back to the area because we had lots of fun ranging and running over the sand hills. We were bought up by the sea so we really enjoyed these times. I am very aware that these lands are where my roots are. My children are very aware of their strong connection to Whangapoua.

23. My children go to Whangapoua regularly by themselves now - they are 26 and 28. We would go often as a family when they were growing up for day trips and camping holidays. They eat kaimoana. I still eat kaimoana. Whenever we go to the beach I do not like going without collecting something - must be instinctive. My children are very aware of their roots. They do love and have an affinity with the place because they keep going back.

24. Whangapoua and the Mangakahia lands are part of my heritage, and I feel that if anyone ever questioned me if I was getting shellfish or walking etc. Down there, I would be quite prepared to stick up for my rights and let them know who I was. I have a right to be there.

25. Many in our family believe that Castle Rock is our ancestor's monument. It remains part of the Mangakahia lands. My Uncle Ruka would say, "When you're over there in Whangapoua, and you look around as far as the eye can see, girly, we own all that," and I can remember that told to us time and time again.

Attempts to Reclaim Rangatiratanga

26. I can recall much of my childhood hearing my grandmother Pareake and her brother Ruka Mangakahia (and at times their sister Pano Waiti from Waipiro Bay) discussing the land problems relating to Whangapoua. It was very clear to me as a child that they had lost their land due to the tactics of the government. Uncle Ruka lived with us on and off in the Coromandel and he was always travelling and searching for information relating to the wrongful dealings of Maori Affairs and others. I remember them talking about a 99 year lease which was to expire and they discussed how the lands should be returned to the whanau. I heard them talking about a lawyer called Earl Kent and how he was tied in with the Kauri Timber Company.

was by the law firm

27. Ruka and my grandmother literally discussed their land problems day and night. At times my sister and I would wake up and they would have been up all night discussing land and how it should be returned. I know that the land issues caused much stress and grief for Ruka and my grandmother. Ruka's total focus in his last years was to regain the farm and other lands which he believed had been wrongfully taken. All their concern regarding the land did no good for their health. Ruka died when he was 58 and my grandmother died when she was 68.

28 Before the Claims Committee was established Hinemoa and I attempted to do some research on the claim. We learned a lot about the operation of the Kauri Timber Company. But we could not afford to continue to work on it because of lack of time and money.

The Mangakahia Whanau Claim

29. I have not been on the Claims Committee, but I have been concerned about the land for a long time. I am absolutely overwhelmed by what the Committee has achieved because it is something that Uncle Ruka strove for but never ever succeeded at. I have nothing but admiration for the Committee for what they have done. I know that what they are doing now, is exactly what Ruka wanted us to do. I would hope that the claim recognises what the old people fought for - that their wishes are acknowledged. We want recognition that the Mangakahia domain (lands and waters) are the mana of the family and that the Mangakahia Whanau should have more control (autonomy) in administrating their lands.

30. In concluding my statement for the Tribunal it is my strong belief that this is our last chance - through this Tribunal Hearing - to have the land that Uncle Ruka and Pareake fought and battled for years returned into our ownership - to the Mangakahia Whanau. I hope my contribution leads to a positive outcome for the family.