

Rongowhakaata Claims Update

11 July 2008

Kia ora whānau

Thanks to those of you who participated in the series of wananga we had over the past year to assist our Treaty of Waitangi negotiations. The korero at these hui has really helped our negotiators in their meetings with the Crown. At the last hui-a-iwi our whānau asked for an update on the claims and some information on the Rongowhakaata negotiation strategy.

Process

Despite our people's desire to negotiate by ourselves, the Crown insisted that if we wanted to negotiate NOW we needed to do so as a collective with other Turanga iwi. For this reason at a hui-a-iwi whānau supported Rongowhakaata entering into negotiations with the Crown as a collective with Ngai Tamanuhiri and Te Pou a Hao Kai (which includes Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Ngā Ariki Kaiputahi, Whanau a Kai, Whānau a Wi Pere and Rangi Whakataetae). Our whānau Nga Uri o Te Kooti Rikirangi is also part of the collective which is called Turanga Manu Whiriwhiri.

For the past year the negotiators have been meeting every week about our claim.

Where we are at in the process

Turanga Manu Whiriwhiri received an initial offer from the Crown last month. The content of this offer is confidential because it could change a lot through the series of discussions the negotiators will be having over the next few weeks with the Crown.

The negotiators are aiming to reach an Agreement in Principle with the Crown by the end of August. The Agreement in Principle will outline the key aspects of the Crown's offer for settling our claim and will be widely consulted on.

One of our rangatahi has been working on a communications plan so that we are in a better position to keep our whānau up to date with the claims.

Key negotiation messages and information

In line with what our people have been saying at hui-a-iwi and the evidence presented at the Waitangi Tribunal hearings the negotiators have been reminding the Crown that:

- Rongowhakaata was most affected by the Crown's invasion both in terms of LAND and LIVES LOST.
- Rongowhakaata seeks it's own redress package (we want to know what the Crown is specifically offering to Rongowhakaata separate from the other claimant groups).
- Our interests in the East Coast claim, particularly Kaiti, Pouawa and Te Toka a Taiao, must be acknowledged.
- We want no less favourable redress than what has occurred in other settlements.

Our negotiators have also put forward the korero that came out of the wananga series about the types of things that our people would like to see in a Rongowhakaata redress package. I have attached a copy of the Wananga Series Report prepared by the Claims Committee in March 2008 that lists these things.

This korero has been put to the Crown by our negotiators. Unfortunately there are no guarantees that we will get everything that we ask for. However the negotiators are trying very hard to secure the best settlement possible for Rongowhakaata and to get as many of the things that our people have told us that they want to see in a redress package.

I hope to be able to update you again in the next month or so, on progress.

Ngā mihi

Erena Nepe
Chair, Rongowhakaata Trust