

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI 540

**IN THE MATTER OF** Section 6 of the Treaty of  
Waitangi Act 1975 (as amended)

**AND** The Tauranga Moana/Western  
Bay of Plenty Claims

**IN THE MATTER OF** A claim by Kihi Ngatai for and  
on behalf of Ngai Te Rangi iwi

**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF HAUATA PALMER  
ON BEHALF OF NGAI TE RANGI**

**BACKGROUND**

**Introduction**

1. **MY** name is Hauata Palmer. My iwi is Ngai Te Rangi of the Mataatua waka. My hapu are Ngai Tuwhiwhia and Ngati Tapu. I am a descendant of Tuwhiwhia and his son Kotorerua.
2. **MY** evidence concerns that part of the Ngai Te Rangi history known as Te Heke o Rangihouhiri the story of the journey of Ngai Te Rangi commencing in Opotiki and ending in Tauranga. The Tribunal will no doubt have read the accounts of the heke from the evidence already presented. This is the Ngai Te Rangi version based on our oral history. You will have heard different versions of these events. Some of them conflict with our version. It is important therefore that the Tribunal hears the Ngai Te Rangi account.

### Acknowledgments

3. I have had the honour to be in Tauranga during the time many of the old people were still with us. Not only were those kaumatua very learned in history and whakapapa but they were also more than ready to share their vast knowledge with us. I pay tribute to them all. Haare Te Kuka, Turirangi Te Kani, Hohua Tutengahe, Te Ao Whakairi Ngatai, Wiremu Karehana, Wiremu Ohia and Kaikohe Roretana and many more whose generosity with information and time have made this possible.
4. **THEY** have since departed into the unknown and left us and following generations with the legacy of a proud history and heritage.
5. **THIS** then is their story.

### Mataatua Waka

6. **THE** Mataatua waka under the rangatira Toroa made landfall at Whakatane and from there the occupants settled the coastal areas and dispersed into the hinterland occupying the fertile environs of what is now Whakatane. I have no information on the early origins of Ngai Te Rangi (although the name Ngai Te Rangi was applied much later in the history of the iwi) and where the group lived in the intervening generations between Toroa and Romainohorangi.

### Tawhitirahi Pa

7. **TE HEKE O RANGIHOUHIRI** begins in the old Ngai Te Rangi pa of Tawhitirahi at Opotiki. Tawhitirahi is situated on the main highway a few kilometres from Opotiki on the Whakatane side. The pa was strategically positioned overlooking the Kukumoa Stream and further out was the coast

and open sea. Food from both the stream and the sea was abundant as was birdlife and aruhe from the fertile surroundings.

8. **NGATI RANGIHOUHIRI** occupied Tawhitirahi approximately 400 years ago. The heke starts after they are visited by a group of Ngati Ha (later called Ngati Pukenga) who lived at Waiaua and Omarumutu. The leader of that group took a liking to the Tui that belonged to Romainohorangi. When the chief was about to return home he asked that the bird be given to him as a gift. Romainohorangi was not happy with this and the leader went away empty handed and angry. A short time later the group returned and attacked the pa in a surprise night raid. The pa was taken and some of the Ngai Te Rangi people were killed. The survivors escaped and fled into the bush in the mountains. They crossed the Motu river and descended into the Waikohu valley. They were found there by people from the Turanganui. They would have been slain but were saved by Waho O Te Rangi. He was a Chief of Ngai Te Rangihokaia, a hapu of Te Aitanga a Hauiti of Takitimu descent who lived at Uawa, now known as Tolaga Bay. Waho o Te Rangi protected Ngai Te Rangi. Ngai Te Rangi were then located on the Whakaroa mountain inland of Waimata and carried out various tasks for Waho o te Rangi. They caught birds and also built whare for him.
9. **AT** this time Rangihouhiri, who was the son of Romainohorangi, took over the leadership of Ngai Te Rangi as Romainohorangi was now an old man and did not take an active part in the leadership of the group. Rangihouhiri now became known as Te Rangihouhiri and he married Pukai who was a descendant of Porourangi.
10. **LIKE** Romainohorangi, Waho o Te Rangi also grew old and realised he was nearing his end. Waho o Te Rangi was concerned that his tribe would not be able to prevent another tribe from taking Te Rangihouhiri and his people to strengthen their own tribe and thus weaken his. He therefore decided that the only solution was to eliminate Ngai Te Rangi.

11. **TE RANGIHOUHIRI** was forewarned of this plan and he and his people prepared to defend themselves to the end. Waho o te Rangi had not realised the group had grown in numbers and fighting prowess during their time at Whakaroa. It was when the whole of Te Aitanga a Hauiti mounted their attack that they realised they had underestimated the capability of Ngai Te Rangi. The tribes fought two battles. Following the second battle Hauiti were forced to come to an agreement with Ngai Te Rangi. The spirit of Rangihouhiri was strong as a result of their adversity. Hauiti and Ngai Te Rangi agreed that the fighting should cease and that Te Rangihouhiri would leave the district. Ngai Te Rangi were allowed time and opportunity to collect supplies for the journey and Hauiti assisted Ngai Te Rangi with the construction of waka.
12. **BOTH** sides scrupulously observed the terms of the agreement and Te Rangihouhiri traveled around the East Cape to the Bay of Plenty where they landed at a place called Hakuranui, and lived there for a time.
13. **THERE** are different accounts of where Hakuranui is situated. One is at Raukokore, the other at Torere. Ngai Tai of Torere say Te Rangihouhiri did live for a time at Hakuranui but at Raukokore. Ngai Te Rangi say that Hakuranui is at Torere. The people of the settlement were not pleased with the intrusion of this group into their area and made their stay as uncomfortable as possible. It was in this atmosphere of tension that the story of Awatope and Tukoko emerged. It seems they went out to plant seed and Awatope favoured broadcasting his seed in order to get away as quickly as possible while Tukoko adopted a more orderly planting which took longer. Awatope completed his task and fled while the more orderly Tukoko continued his task and was thus caught and killed. In terms of revenge and reprisal Te Rangihouhiri decided it was not worth the effort so they decided to move on towards Whakatane, passing their old home of Tawhitirahi on the way.

14. **AT** Whakatane they built a pa at Kaputerangi and settled there relatively undisturbed on the strength of their reputation as a fighting force.
15. **ALTHOUGH** related by whakapapa to Ngati Awa there was still some uneasiness between the two. Te Rangihouhiri had designs on the Ngati Awa stronghold of Papaka (which is immediately above the town of Whakatane) and wondered whether to take the initiative over the issue. To this end, Tamapahore was one night creeping about under the fortification of Papaka looking for weaknesses when a woman came out of the pa onto the ramparts above him. On impulse he tickled her with the point of his taiaha. She raised the alarm but Tamapahore escaped not realising she was a daughter of the chief of the pa and that the insult was a grave one.
16. **THE** decision was made to move on yet again but Tamapahore argued that they should fight before they departed. Ngati Awa would have none of it. If they fought Ngati Awa would wipe them out but if they left in peace then they would be allowed to go. Thus, Te Rangihouhiri moved on once more.
17. **NGAI TE RANGI** then left Whakatane and went to Te Awa o te Atua, settling on what was to become known as Whakapaukorero. The pa is directly inland from the present railway underpass on the way to Matata. Te Awa o te Atua was under the mana of a section of Ngati Awa who had expelled the earlier occupants and had no intention of having Ngai Te Rangi in their place. Te Rangihouhiri did not intend to settle in that area and so he sent Tamapahore to spy out the lay of the land at Maketu.
18. **MAKETU** was occupied by Tapuika under the chief Tatahau a first cousin of Rangihouhiri and Tamapahore. The area had an abundance of resources and was well populated. Tatahau also had links to the powerful Waitaha a Hei. Tamapahore disguised his true purpose by visiting his aunty

Torohangataringa who had married the Tapuika chief Ruangutu. Following the visit Tamapahore and Ngai Te Rangi were given land at Owahara where they lived for several years. Despite the inherent risk Te Rangihouhiri decided the land was worth fighting for. The pretext for the attack was the killing of Tukoko at Hakuranui.

19. **RANGIHOUHIRI** fortified the Owahara pa and prepared to attack Tatahau. Although relations were sometimes tense with Rangihouhiri's Ngati Awa kin he would be able to rely on them to assist with the invasion. There was Ngati Awa at Matata and Whakatane, Ngati Kahurere and Ngati Irawharo at Otamarakau and Maruahaira of Ngati Whakahemo was at Pukehina.
20. **AS** an aside, Ngati Kahurere and Ngati Irawharo eventually settled in Tauranga and their descendants today are Ngai Tukairangi.
21. **THE** Ngai Te Rangi force set out from Te Awa o te Atua and marched towards Maketu. The main force camped at Pukehina while a strong section took up a position at the Waihi river acting as a fishing party. Ten men crossed the Waihi and were searching among the plantation on the hill above Maketu where they found a woman in the kumara gardens. She was Punoho, daughter of Tatahau. They assaulted her and the last one to do so was Werapinaki who was partly crippled. She insulted him by saying, "He atua ki te po, he weu ki te ao." meaning that he would be a god if it was night but in the day he was the ugliest thing she had seen. Stung by her insult he killed her and her body was thrown into a kumara pit where it could not be found.
22. **WHEN** Tapuika realised that Punoho was missing they attempted in vain to find her. Suspecting Ngai Te Rangi of foul play, Tatahau sent his mother Torohangataringa to enquire about the fate of Punoho. She was able to confirm that Punoho was killed by Werapinaki.

23. **AS** a result a raiding party of Tapuika crossed the Waihi river at night to retaliate and killed Werapinaki. After the attack Tatahau's sons suggested that they go to the Tapuika pa at Rangiuru for safety as they had assumed that Ngai Te Rangi would attack. However, Tatahau remained at Maketu and the next day Rangihouhiri attacked.
24. **NGAI TE RANGI** took the initiative by assaulting and taking Tatahau's Pukemarie pa. Tatahau himself was killed as were many of his tribe. His sons and the remaining survivors escaped to Rangiuru. Rangihouhiri followed on and all the other settlements suffered the same fate. Rangihouhiri returned to Owihara to prepare for the retaliation from Tapuika and Waitaha.
25. **MANY** attempts were made by the Ngaoho of Te Arawa to recover the lost territory. The first wave was from Waitaha a Hei who came from east Tauranga because Tatahau's mother, Torohangataringa was from that tribe. Interestingly, Torohangataringa's sisters were the mothers of Rangihouhiri and Tamapahore.
26. A battle was fought at Te Kakaho at Maketu and Waitaha were repelled by sheer force of numbers. Waitaha underestimated the strength of Rangihouhiri. Since their time at Whangara, Rangihouhiri's people had grown in number and strength. They were a disciplined force with an almost indomitable spirit forged through the many trials faced on their journey. The Tapuika therefore sought assistance from Ngati Maru at Thames and Ngati Ranganui. Te Rangihouhiri also sought assistance, ironically from Ngati Pukenga who had driven them out of their home at Tawhitirahi.
27. **THE** combined forces of Ngati Maru under Te Ringa, Ranganui under Kinonui and Tapuika, and Waitaha under Tiritiri and Manu sons of Tatahau, advanced upon Maketu. The first battle was a night attack on Herekaki Pa which was taken. Tutengaehe, a commander and eldest son of Te

Rangihouhiri was killed in this battle. When Rangihouhiri heard of his son's fate he said:

*"Haere e tama mou tai ahiahi,  
moku tai awatea."*

*"Go my son, on the evening tide,  
I will follow on the morning tide."*

28. **THE** next morning opened with the beginning of the battle of Poporohuamea. Rangihouhiri was killed in this battle as he had predicted. The battle lasted all day and involved large numbers of both sides. It was said to be an immense battle. Both sides fought to a standstill and the Te Arawa and Ngati Maru forces retreated across the Kaituna river. Ngai Te Rangi retired to their pa.
29. **FOLLOWING** the death of Te Rangihouhiri the tribe then became known as Ngati Rangihouhiri which was later shortened to Ngai Te Rangi. Tamapahore then became the chief of Ngai Te Rangi. The name of the Ngai Te Rangi settlement then became Whakapaukorero referring to the last words of Te Rangihouhiri.
30. **TE ARAWA** were still determined to expel the Ngai Te Rangi invaders. Te Arawa launched many more attacks on Ngai Te Rangi and each time were unsuccessful. They could not displace Tamapahore and Ngai Te Rangi. The Ngai Te Rangi conquest of the area was now complete. The war had lasted so many years and involved so many tribes and much bloodshed was at an end. Ngai Te Rangi now held undisputed and undisturbed possession of Maketu. The lands and pa were then divided among Ngai Te Rangi and its allies. Ngai Te Rangi lived in relative peace for many years. However, the peace was interrupted and the heke would continue this time to Tauranga.



### The Battle of the Kokowai

31. **KINONUI** the son of Tamateapokaiwhenua, the eponymous ancestor of Ngati Ranginui, lived on Mauao in what has been described as an impregnable pa. Ranginui, his elder brother and founder of Ngati Ranginui lived at Papamoia. Kinonui and Ranginui reigned over the entire Tauranga region.
32. **ONE** day a group left Mauao on a fishing expedition when a storm blew up and the canoe was overturned. All the fishermen perished except for Taurawheke who made it to Maketu. The next day a Ngai Te Rangi woman was gathering shell fish when she discovered Taurawheke. He was suffering from the cold and exposure so she returned to the pa to fetch some food and clothing. She met her husband on the way and told him about Taurawheke. After urging her to hurry, he went to the beach and murdered Taurawheke. Ngati Ranginui assumed he died on the fishing expedition. The wife concealed the killing until her husband beat her one day. She then revealed the true fate of Taurawheke.
33. **WORD** of this eventually reached Ngati Ranginui. They immediately decided that they must seek revenge.
34. **AT** Te Tumu a party of Ngai Te Rangi were cutting toetoe rushes for roof thatching when they were suddenly attacked and two of their members were taken prisoner. The prisoners were my tupuna Tuwhiwhia and his son Tauaiti who had crossed the Kaituna river when all of a sudden they found themselves surrounded by the enemy. The father was decapitated, his head placed into the canoe and set adrift to reveal its own story when it was later recovered. Tauaiti was spared for a more prolonged and agonising death. His entire body was lacerated with the serrated edge of the toetoe grass. During this torture Tauaiti cried out:

*“Aue, he aha rawa taku he kia penei he make moku  
 Akuanei te moana nei i hohonu, me hanga kia*

*papaku i taku mokai ia Kotorerua."*

*"Oh what have I done to deserve this,  
This ocean though deep, will be rendered shallow  
When my younger brother Kotorerua hears of this."*

35. **WHAT** he meant was the pain he was suffering would be non-existent compared to the depth of pain that would be felt by his captors when his younger brother Kotorerua would avenge his death. Tauaiti died before reaching Mauao and his body was deposited in the canal that runs parallel with Hull Road at the Mount, known as Te Awa o Tukorako.
36. **KOTORERUA** along with Tamapahore devised a plan to seek revenge for the deaths of Tuwhiwhia and Tauaiti.
37. **KOTORERUA** was so angry he planned a complete annihilation of Ngati Ranginui. Kotorerua consulted with his brother-in-law Putangimaru from Waikato.
38. **KOTORERUA'S** sister Tuwera, heard of the murders and because her husband Putangimaru was a tohunga she asked him to visit Kotorerua at Maketu and tell him of what he must do to successfully avenge his father and brother's deaths. Putangimaru told Kotorerua to visit him at Hinuera the following day but on the way he was to call in to Pukewhanake Pa at the mouth of the Wairoa river. He was told to take a guide with him named Ika whom he would recognise because only half his face was tattooed. He was instructed that when they were traveling and they arrived at the stream that flows down the lower slopes of the western Kaimai ranges he must kill his guide, remove his heart and take it to Putangimaru as a sacrificial offering to appease and placate the gods. If Kotorerua was successful then he was told to leap over the enclosure around Putangimaru's house. Kotorerua was so determined that he followed Putangimaru's explicit instructions and Ika became the first martyr of the battle of Kokowai.

39. **PUTANGIMARU** advised Kotorerua to return home and in due course Mauao would be his.
40. **THE** assault on Mauao would be simple, well planned and brutal as will become evident. Kotorerua and a few warriors masquerading as slaves, visited Kononui at Mauao under pretence of friendliness. He gained entry by offering baskets containing earth with kokowai sprinkled on the surface to conceal the earth. Kokowai (red ochre) was a rare and highly valued commodity used as a paint for dyeing woodcraft such as carvings. Fortunately it was night and the hosts could not see the earth beneath the kokowai. Kinonui suspected that Kotorerua had an ulterior motive for his visit, but played along with the charade until an opportunity to kill him arose. Kinonui invited his guests to share the evening meal with them. Kotorerua declined as fish was not on their menu.
41. **AS** the evening progressed, sleeping arrangements were made for the visitors. As a precaution a sentry was posted at the entrance of the building so that when the visitors fell asleep their despatch would be quick and simple. Kotorerua also had a daring plan. Kotorerua was confined to the sleeping house but his slaves were free to come and go as they pleased. Kotorerua ordered his slaves to go to the beach and check the moorings of their canoes. When they were returning they were told to gather firewood and quietly stack it at the doorway and at the sides of the house. Meanwhile he urged his hosts to stoke the fires as he feigned cold. When enough firewood was accumulated and the guard had become drowsy at his post, Kotorerua leapt from his position, sealed the door and set the firewood around the building alight. In a short time the house became a blazing beacon. This could be termed as the turning point of Ngati Ranginui supremacy and the fall of a stronghold that had for many years been shelter to the tangata whenua. The young Kotorerua had indeed planned his attack to the last detail, for prior to his leaving Te Tumu he had arranged with his forces to storm Mauao at moonrise and in order to identify one another, to display the broad and luminous leaf from the

Wharangi tree upon their foreheads. This then would mean that those who did not wear the symbol were regarded as enemy and treated as such.

42. **BY** morning the pa on Mauao was totally destroyed. There was devastation all around. The first stage of the conquest was now complete. The Ngati Ranginui survivors had managed to make their way across the harbour to safety. One version of the battle is that Tamapahore was supposed to have blocked the escape across the harbour. However, he only turned up on the morning after the battle. Kotorerua and his warriors saw Tamapahore arrive from the summit and as they approached the base they rolled rocks down the side of the mountain at Tamapahore to show their displeasure at his lateness. Another version says that Tamapahore participated at the base of Mauao and when he attempted to settle part of the pa the other groups rolled rocks down at them to prevent this. Whatever the version, Tamapahore settled and occupied the Maungataua-Papamoa area.
43. **SUCH** was the total and complete destruction of the settlement on Mauao that the summit of Mauao has never been reoccupied to this day while the slopes at the base were settled by some hapu.
44. **NGAI** Te Rangi did not stop there. They then crossed over the main land and took over the Otumoetai pa and established themselves there. Kotorerua however returned to Maketu from Otumoetai. After some time he returned to Tauranga to find that many of his people at Otumoetai were intermarrying with the local people. Kotorerua was so angry at such a friendly relationship that he destroyed Otumoetai pa and its inhabitants, friend and foe alike, before re-establishing the settlement there. After this, the land was divided among the hapu of Ngai Te Rangi. The Tribunal has heard before that it was only Mauao that was taken. However, the conquest of Ngai Te Rangi extended over to the main land. It has always been my understanding that you did not have to conquer and walk over and settle every acre of land. Ngai Te

Rangi had defeated the main settlements in Tauranga and thereafter became the dominant tribe in the area.

45. **THE** final destination of Tauranga is of significance. This was the home of their ancestors Whene and Taka of the Takitimu waka. Also, Paewhitu (the mother of Rangihouhiri) and Tuwairua (the mother of Tamapahore) were Waitaha people who had occupied Tauranga for many generations. Ngai Te Rangi were not foreigners in this land so it was fitting that they should again follow the footprints of their ancestors and settle this land.
46. **IT** has been said by some that Kotorerua took Mauao by treachery. When Kotorerua visited Kinonui both knew exactly what was going to happen. It was a battle of wits and ingenuity rather than treachery. Our history is filled with events that might be described as treacherous. However, such acts were common. In the case of Kotorerua and Kinonui, both knew that in the end one side would perish and the other would triumph.

### Summary

47. **THE** Ngai Te Rangi return to Tauranga followed an arduous journey over many years from Tawhitirahi to Whangara to Whakatane then to Maketu and finally Tauranga.
48. **FOLLOWING** the conquest of Ngati Ranginui, Ngai Te Rangi have re-established their rights to the Tauranga region through their ancestors who had previously settled the area followed by their conquest and occupation.
49. **ALTHOUGH** our relationship with Ngati Ranginui at the time of the battle of Kokowai was bitter, since the occupation of this area there has been a lot of intermarriage and sharing of resources so that many generations later we occupy this territory as friends rather than foe. As the Tribunal will have seen, we have a common whakapapa and when faced with challenges from

outside groups, Ngai Te Rangi and Ngati Ranginui have always co-operated. The classic example of this is the defence of Pukehinahina by the Tauranga iwi against the attack from the Crown. The relationship between the Tauranga iwi was harmonious until the raupatu and the Crown's actions in this area over the last 150 years which have created fresh animosities.

50. **NEVERTHELESS**, Ngai Te Rangi rights to this area through ancestry, conquest and occupation are without question. The descendants of the Ngai Te Rangi ancestors who fought their way to Tauranga have maintained a presence in this region since the battle of Kokowai. We say that Ngai Te Rangi were the dominant iwi in Tauranga. However, regardless of the position of the iwi before 1860, the Crown's invasion of Tauranga Moana rendered the past obsolete and a new order followed. Although my evidence deals with Te Heke o Te Rangihouhiri, our claims are concentrated on the conquering of the Tauranga iwi by the Crown and the effects that have followed.
  
51. **FOLLOWING** the conquest of Tauranga Moana as the final act of Te Heke o Rangihouhiri, Ngai Te Rangi were able to finally settle down after years of fighting and living a nomadic lifestyle. At times the fighting had brought the tribe to near extinction but they managed to survive and we are the proud descendants of those warriors and nomads.