

News Release

For immediate release

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Tikanga Supreme Court Decision Articulates What is Wrong with the Ardern Confiscations

Trouncing of the Crown by Ngati Whatua Orakei in its Supreme Court case which argued the Crown decisions in cross claims were trampling over tikanga, is the message Tauranga iwi Ngai Te Rangī has also been sending.

Chair of Ngai Te Rangī Iwi Charlie Tawhiao said the result in the Supreme Court shines a beacon on the 'bull in a china shop' decision-making by Minister of Treaty Negotiations, Andrew Little, when he recently signed a Treaty deal with a collective of Hauraki iwi. That Treaty deal cut right across tikanga and was, in fact, based on fiction.

"The Supreme Court decision opens the door to getting the Hauraki debacle overturned and I congratulate Ngati Whatua Orakei for its focus on tikanga. This is a significant decision that will change the way cross claims are handled.

"The minister must have known they were likely to lose the case so he pushed ahead with a signing to try to get the highly questionable Hauraki Iwi Collective and the Marutuahu deals through ahead of the Supreme Court decision. It signals a lack of good faith by the Crown and opens the doors to challenge. It is sad that iwi are reduced to expending considerable time and money to fight for justice against a government that tries to pretend it upholds justice for Maori."

Mr Tawhiao said the next arena in which to take the fight is the Waitangi Tribunal where a large number of cases against the Hauraki Collective deal are stacked up.

"The Crown has tried to bulldoze through law that can only lead to future litigation, and years, if not decades, of new grievances."

He referred to the challenge that Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern made to iwi leaders to hold her accountable.

"She is accountable for the shonky Treaty deal content that has been going on within her caucus. She is accountable for the 2018 confiscation of our land by the Crown. She is responsible for the patronising attitude of Andrew Little toward us and toward tikanga. She will also be responsible for Labour's loss of the Waiariki seat through Tauranga moana in 2020."

Mr Tawhiao said Maori culture is worth fighting for and Ngai Te Rangī iwi will fight to overturn the Ardern Confiscation for as long as it takes.

"The Ngati Whatua Orakei decision is an important step. It indicates that while Andrew Little and the Office of Treaty Settlements don't understand the importance of what we've been saying, there are sharper minds that do.

"We will NOT allow ourselves to be disempowered and we will continue to hold the Ardern government to account."

For further comment contact:

Charlie Tawhiao

027 232 8470

For media assistance contact:

Del Carlini

021 709 907

Phone. 07 5753765 EXT 213

Address. Te Awa o Tukorako Lane, Taiaho Place, Mount Maunganui 3116

Postal Address. PO Box 4369, Mount Maunganui South 3149

Email. admin@ngaiterangi.iwi.nz

Website. www.ngaiterangi.com



He toroa whakakopa au nō runga i Kārewa, he pōtiki manawa ū nā Ngāi Te Rangī

I am a soaring albatross high above Kārewa, a stout-hearted child that belongs to Ngāi Te Rangī.