

BEFORE THE FRESHWATER HEARINGS PANEL

IN THE MATTER **of the Resource Management Act 1991**

AND

IN THE MATTER **Plan Change 5**

**EVIDENCE IN CHIEF OF TAWHIRI MOREHU FOR THE
PROPRIETORS OF TAHEKE 8C & ADJOINING BLOCKS
INCORPORATION**

Dated: 15 September 2022

Solicitor on the record:

Loretta Lovell
Lovell & Associates Ltd
WELLINGTON

Ph 04 527-0925
loretta@lovellassociates.co.nz

Counsel instructed:

Andrew K Irwin
Clifton Chambers
PO Box 5161
WELLINGTON 6140

Ph 0274 722-961
andrew.irwin@cliftonchambers.co.nz

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Ko Matawhaura te maunga
Ko Tahingarū te tangata
Ko Te Rotoiti te moana
Ko Houmaitawhiti te tupuna whare
Ko Pounamunui te marae
Ko Tawhiri Morehu ahau
He hononga tōku ki a Ngāti Hinerangi

Introduction

1. My name is Tawhiri Morehu. I am the chairman of The Proprietors of the Taheke 8C & Adjoining Blocks Incorporation (“Taheke 8C”). I am of Ngāti Hinerangi, a hapū of Ngāti Pikiao.
2. I want to make the following points:
 - 2.1. Where our lands adjoin the river, we are the mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahi kā and kaitiaki of our lands and the river.
 - 2.2. Iwi and hapū (especially Ngāti Hinerangi) do have important associations with the river, but not to the exclusion of us.
 - 2.3. People cannot assume there are existing lines of communication between iwi and hapū on the one hand and those (like us) who are the mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahi kā and kaitiaki at specific locations of the river on the other.
 - 2.4. We all need to establish better communication with one another.

Taheke 8C as mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahi kā and kaitiaki

3. From time immemorial, my people – that is my ancestors, through to my grandparents and parents, my generation, my children and my mokopuna – have lived on, cared for and been sustained by our lands at Ōkere. We are, and always have been, the ahi kā, the mana whenua, the tangata whenua and the kaitiaki of our lands on the banks of the river at Ōkere.
4. In the early part of the 20th century, the Taheke lands held by my grandparents and parents were put into a development scheme. The lands were farmed and

incurred debt. In the 1950s various land owners decided whether to incorporate land interests or not. The Morehu and Vercoe whānau with others joined together and established the Taheke 8C Incorporation. Since then, we have farmed our lands for the benefit of the whānau within the incorporation. We struggled but eventually paid off the debts on our lands. Today, we look to develop our land's geothermal potential for the benefit, not of my generation, but for our mokopuna and their children to come.

5. Today we hold title to the following lands:



6. On the eastern side of the Ōkere River for a continuous area of about three kilometres of the river, we own Ōkere 1A1, Ōkere 1A2 and Taheke Papakāinga 24

Block. We understand that our title includes at least one half of the riverbed. Further upstream, we also hold title to the Taheke Papakāinga 19 Block, near the start of the river.

7. On the western side of the river, we own Ōkere 1C1. Ōkere 1C1 is narrowly separated from the river by a strip of land vested in the Department of Conservation.
8. We own other lands near the river as well.

Iwi and hapū

9. The Kaituna River Document states:

Ngāti Pikiao

“Ngā Toitōi i tiaki o te awa Ōkere.”

It is the cockabullies (Ngāti Hinerangi/Hinekiri) that will guard the river Ōkere.

The phrase “Ngā Toitōi i tiaki o te awa Ōkere” comes from a Ngāti Pikiao Waiata “E kore a Ngāti Hinerangi” which depicts the relationship between Ngāti Hinerangi and Ngāti Hinekiri, sub-tribes of Ngāti Pikiao and the Ōkere River, which is the first part of the river commonly referred to as Kaituna.

10. As I know and was taught the waiata, the relevant lines are: “Engari ngā toitōi tiaki o te awa ki Ōkere rā, ka kite koe i te kiri kahurangi”. The words “ngā toitōi” do refer to Ngāti Hinerangi and Ngāti Hinekiri, who were one hapū.
11. Ngāti Hinerangi has an important connection to the lands and river at Ōkere. But that connection is not the same as that which we, the whānau of Taheke 8C, have to the lands and river. It is we who have actually maintained and lived on our lands. As I have said above, it is we who are the mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahī kā and kaitiaki of our lands and the river where it flows by and at times over our lands.
12. The Kaituna River Document also includes the following statement:

The Ōkere River begins at Maraetakaroro and Motuōhiwa and cascades through meandering rapids of Te Rerenga a Tutea to the gorges of Te Pākira, Te Wairoa and Te Ākau, down to the most sacred place upon the river, Kohangakāeaea. From Kohangakāeaea to the Mangorewa River outlet, the river is known as the Kaituna, and from the Mangorewa to where the river meets the sea, the river is known as Awarua.

13. Ki a mātou, i te wā e ora tonu ana ō mātou pakeke, ō mātou koeke, ko te ingoa o te awa mai i te timatanga, ko Ōkere. Koira tōna ingoa mai i reira ki Kohangakāeaea. Kāore e tino mōhitia tēnei wāhi e kīa nei ko Kohangakāeaea. He wāhi o te awa kei waenganui i a Waiwhakareto me Te Hiapō. Mai i Kohangakāeaea ki Paengaroa, ko Te Awarua te ingoa o te awa. Mai i Paengaroa ki te tai kātahi anō ko Te Kaituna te ingoa. To us, in the times when our elders were alive, the name of the river from its start was Ōkere. That was its name from there to Kohangakāeaea. Kohangakāeaea is not a well-known place. It is a place on the river between Waiwhakareto and Te Hiapō. From Kohangakāeaea to Paengaroa, the river's name was Te Awarua. From Paengaroa to the sea it was then known as the Kaituna.
14. The Taheke 8C incorporation supports hapū and iwi having a greater role in the management of our natural resources. We simply say that that role should not come at the exclusion of those (like us) who exercise and actually are the mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahi kā and kaitiaki of those resources. We are concerned that the Kaituna River Document and Plan Change 5 place too much focus on the role of iwi and hapū and fail to include specific reference to us.
15. We are not the iwi or the hapū and the iwi and hapū are not us.


Lines of communication

16. People cannot assume there are existing lines of communication between iwi and hapū on the one hand and those (like us) who are the mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahi kā and kaitiaki at specific locations of the river on the other.
17. There has been public consultation on the Kaituna River Document to date. No one from Te Maru o Kaituna, however, has directly approached Taheke 8C to discuss the Kaituna River Document. I think that could have been helpful. We could have, kanohi-ki-te-kanohi, discussed our common objectives for the river. For our part, we would have sought to explore ways to strengthen how we, as mana whenua for a long stretch of the river, would be involved in managing the river. If iwi and hapū are to have some function in relation to the river in the

stretch by our lands, we could have worked together to decide how these roles would be performed. This has not happened to date.

18. I note there is no established or formalised direct line of communication between Taheke 8C and Ngāti Pūkiao and its hapū. I am not criticising anyone in saying that. I simply want the panel to be clear that where the Kaituna River Document and Plan Change 5 place a clear focus on the role that “iwi and hapū” should have, we cannot assume that means that those on the ground – who are the mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahi kā and kaitiaki – will necessarily be involved.
19. We all need to establish better lines of communication with one another. I have asked Taheke 8C’s Acting General Manager to start work on establishing better relationships with the council, with iwi and hapū representatives and with the Department of Conservation. I hope that these organisations will be open to engagement with us. I also hope the panel will consider how Plan Change 5 can occur in a way that better reflects the role that we, the whānau of the Taheke 8C Incorporation, have as mana whenua, tangata whenua, ahi kā and kaitiaki of the river.

Dated this 15th day of September 2022


Tawhiri Morehu