

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Make a stand for your Iwi’

Iwi representing just over 30% of the Māori population came together yesterday on a Kaiaua marae to commence a tikanga (customary) based process to assist the Crown to resolve overlapping Treaty claims.

Ngāti Paoa negotiator, Morehu Wilson, says that this represents an important step towards resolving the current debate that is raging across Aotearoa.

“Minister Andrew Little in his wisdom has given us time to undertake a tikanga process, so we thought it best to get the process started,” he says.

“Yesterday was the first of many hui on the marae that will eventually resolve our overlapping interests through a tikanga process.”

The current issue around overlapping claims is centred around the actions of three tribes from Thames – Te Patukirikiri, Ngāti Tamaterā and Ngāti Maru – who are claiming interests into Tauranga, Auckland and Hamilton. These claimed interests are strongly disputed by other iwi, who have voiced their opposition through protest marches to Wellington, legal action in the Supreme Court, and submissions to the United Nations.

The three Thames iwi did not attend yesterday’s meeting despite the hui being hosted by a member of their own Collective, Ngāti Paoa.

The hui was attended by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Waikato Tainui, Ngāi Te Rangi, and hosts Ngāti Paoa, and was intended to be the start of a tikanga process.

Ngarimu Blair, Deputy Chair of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, says it was disappointing that the three iwi were “once again a no-show”.

“These tribes claim they will meet on a tikanga basis but only after the Minister has signed the Hauraki Collective Settlement,” Mr Blair says.

“From a Māori perspective there is no tikanga in that. They are holding the Minister to ransom by trying to force his hand to initial or sign.”

Rāhui Papa, negotiator for Waikato Tainui, says there is widespread concern amongst iwi that their unique identities are being threatened by a small number of other tribes exploiting the Crown’s overlapping claims process.

“Last month more than 70 iwi who make up the Iwi Chairs Forum, and constitute more than 90% of Māori, formally supported a tikanga process to resolve overlapping interests.”

Charlie Tawhiao, Chair of Ngāi Te Rangi, says that this is a crucial time for all iwi to come together.

“Our tikanga defines us; it defines who we are as a people. We will do everything we can to protect our identity as a people,” he says.

“Whether you are Ngā Puhī or Ngāi Tahu, Tainui or Tūhoe, we all need to come together to make a stand.”

Ngāti Paoa Chair, Gary Thompson, agrees and is encouraging all iwi to join forces before they’re individually confronted with the same issue.

“This is much bigger than Treaty Settlements,” he says.

“The long-term impact on Māori is huge. It’s about who we are and where we belong.”

Those at yesterday’s hui called for a nationwide ‘Tikanga Campaign’ appealing to iwi, hapū, whānau and Māori from all over New Zealand to converge on the steps of Parliament in Wellington on Thursday 9 August 2018 in recognition of the United Nations’ ‘International Day of World Indigenous Peoples.’

“We are the indigenous people of New Zealand. We want this campaign to bring our rangatahi and kaumātua together in a positive way to make a stand for our tikanga (our way of life),” says Mr Thompson.

“Our call to action is for all our people: make a stand for who you are and where you come from. Make a stand for your iwi and who you represent in this world!”

ENDS

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