

Sharing the vision of Kotahitanga

IWI CHAIRS FORUM HIGHLIGHTS: 2 & 3 FEBRUARY 2017, WAITANGI

WHAKATAU AND INTRODUCTION

The Iwi Chairs Forum was hosted by Ngāti Kuri in Waitangi with 128 attendees and over 48 iwi present. This was the first time Rt. Hon. Bill English attended the Forum as Prime Minister.

Harry Burkhardt, Chair of Ngāti Kuri, said the attendance of the Prime Minister allowed the Forum "to discuss the key issues facing our people and to make progress towards our aspirations as Iwi. The Crown and Iwi may disagree on many issues, but we also seek to find alignment in areas that are important for Maori and for all New Zealanders".

In addition to meeting with the Prime Minister, Iwi Chairs held sessions with the Minister for Māori Development, the Minister for Whānau Ora, the Minister of Finance, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Children, the Minister for Trade, and the Minister for Economic Development.

The Forum also discussed the Crown's approach to overlapping claims in Treaty settlements. It was agreed by the Forum that the current approach by the Government disregards tikanga and ahi kā roa. As a result, the Forum agreed to pressure Ministers to ensure that iwi and the Crown co-construct a robust policy and process, incorporating tikanga Māori, for resolving overlapping claims issues.

The remainder of the Forum centred on four key pou: Pou Tikanga, Pou Taiao, Pou Tangata and Pou Tahua. Highlights for each of the Pou are as follows.

For more information and a video about the Iwi Chairs Forum and Iwi Leader Group's please visit www.iwichairs.maori.nz

POU TIKANGA

In Pou Tikanga there was an update on the Constitutional Transformation Working Party, which is tasked with helping to develop an inclusive Constitution for Aotearoa. The group continues to receive frequent requests for presentations on the kaupapa.

This pou also discussed the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People. Resolving that when New Zealand supports the declaration the following priorities must be adhered to:

- i. Constitutional transformation
- ii. Self determination
- iii. Lands, territories and resources
- iv. Cultural rights
- v. Equality and non-discrimination and practical implementation and technical assistance.

POU TAI AO

There were four key kaupapa discussed as part of Pou Taiao; fresh water, conservation, climate change and marine protected areas.

For conservation, it was noted that the relationship protocol discussed at the previous hui has been held up due to the inclusion of the Kermadec Islands matter under Marine Protected Areas. The Forum confirmed that the Kermadec Islands will be excluded from the agreement and this will be expressed to the Minister to ensure that the relationship protocol can be signed.

When the protocol is finalised it will bring a new level of cooperation between Iwi and the Department of Conservation, which will begin a more open journey to achieve our aspirations on our lands.

The other significant kaupapa in this pou was freshwater management. In particular, it was noted that the Forum is embarking on an intensive work programme focused on water allocation. This work programme will help inform our technicians in freshwater to determine the key principles for our people around water allocation and what tools and methods are most appropriate to give effect to those principles. A series of regional hui across the country began on the 31 January in Hopuhopu and will continue to March 2017.

It was noted that the Iwi Leaders Groups in this pou (Freshwater, Oil, Minerals and Gas, Climate Change, Marine Protected Areas and Conservation) will be consolidated into one Iwi Leaders Group for Natural Resources. This will be tested for 12 months and is expected to improve the technical advisor's efficiency and enable a more strategic relationship with the Crown.



POU TANGATA

As in previous Forums, iwi leaders voiced their concern about the complex social issues facing Māori. They highlighted there must be a real push on Ministers to help whānau who are struggling across the country.

Rahui Papa when discussing how the Forum relays their concerns to Ministers said we need to ensure Ministers hear the “roar” of this Forum.

A key focus of the discussion was the Children, Young Persons and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Bill. The Forum recognised that with 60% of all children in care being of Maori whakapapa, this Bill could provide the opportunity to effect real change and achieve a meaningful reduction in the number of Māori children in care. But Iwi Chairs have opposed the current drafting, particularly removing the obligation to consider whānau, hapū, and iwi when making decisions about where to place a Māori child.

The Iwi Chairs Forum expects that the Bill is co-written so that Māori are fully involved in the process and to ensure mana tamariki me tōnā whakapapa is at the heart of the Bill.

This pou also discussed housing, iwi data, justice and Whānau Ora and the need to enhance rangatahi involvement in the Forum.



POU TAHUA

As in previous Pou Tahua sessions, Iwi Chairs put an emphasis on growing the Māori economy and using iwi assets to increase economic growth. It was reemphasised that if Māori work collectively they can have a real impact on the economic development of Aotearoa.

The pou also put forward a motion for Ministers to agree to an Iwi-Crown Economic Taumata so that the Government can work with Māori to grow the Māori economy and thus, the New Zealand economy.

Te Ture Whenua Māori Bill was discussed by Willie Te Aho stating “we need to increase the rights for Māori land owners.” Māori landlocked land was highlighted as a key issue. The pou reemphasised that everyone has the right to access their land and this is a key point for the Iwi Chairs Forum advocacy.

The pou recommended that the Forum support the Bill if certain criteria are met. These included zero rates for papakāinga land connected to a marae., restructuring of paper roads, substantial funding for Māori land and a significant rethinking of how the māori land service will run.

This pou also discussed the Dragon-Taniwha Economic Summit, hosted by Ngāti Kahungunu, which is being held in February 2017 in the lead up to Te Matatini. It is expected that this hui could contribute \$100 million to the Māori economy by developing business links to China and the Pacific.

He waka kōtuia kāhore e tukutukua ngā mimira.

A canoe that is interlaced will not become separated at the bow.