

MINUTE 16 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Record of Hui at Aaruka Marae

Central and Southern Block Mining Project [FTAA-2512-1153]

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[Start of Recorded Material: 0:07].

TAITUWHA KING: Kia ora taatou. Kei ngaa koomihana, teenaa kotou. Ka nui te mihi. Thank you for the opportunity to have a koorero. Ko wai ahau? Ko Taituwaha King taaku ingoa. Noo konei, noo Taharoa ahau. Ko Tainui te waka. Ko Waikato te iwi. Ko Ngaati Mahuta te hapu. Kei Taharoa te kainga tuuturu. Ko taaku mahi, I'm the Chair of Te Kooraha Marae, so I represent and have the mandate of the marae. I stand. I'm talking on behalf of our marae as well.

Just a little side thing, Commissioner Lou, at AUT, I'm actually also a senior lecturer at AUT, so I have—

COMMISSIONER LOU: You would've recognised me.

TAITUWHA KING: Yes, I've seen you somewhere. Anyway teenaa koutou. Might I add also, how beautiful your reo. Your reo, I just want to acknowledge the efforts that you three have gone through to connect to our reo, so through our reo, you connect to tikanga. I want to acknowledge that as well, so teenaa koutou.

Apart from a whole lot of things, I guess my part in today is to lay out a historical whakapapa about our area, about who we are as Ngaati Mahuta, how we got here and how the marae are connected together. I wanted to give a cultural perspective to the commissioners so that you could see how we all joined together, and our cousins from Te Nehenehenui, teenaa koutou. Teenaa koorua koutou. There are lots of overlaps with Maniapoto and Waikato, and then you might also have a question that why are we saying Waikato te Iwi when we're so far away from that? Well, I'm about to tell you why, so hold on and let's go for a ride.

Okay, so our pepeha, our whakapapa stems from Waikato inland, Ngaati Mahuta inland, so Taupiri and Orangiwhao are our maunga. Waikato and Koraha are our awa along Mitiwai and Taharoa ngaa wai. I'm talking about Ngaa Roto o Taharoa. There are several lakes, not just Taharoa, but Numiti (correct me if I'm wrong), Rotoroa, Piopio, Rototapu and Harihari. Those lakes stem just behind us over here. You'll be able to see them. Our waka is Tainui. Our people are Waikato and Ngaati Mahuta ki te Hauaauru, which is more so the west coast or where coast the most is kina on toast. That's our hapu, okay, so how do we connect?

We can see here part of our Waikato connections also stems out as far north to overlap then Ngaati Whaatua and also across to Hauraki as well, and then we overlap into Maniapoto. But more so, specifically our area is captured in two areas, actually two districts, two councils. The Waitomo

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District Council and the Otorohanga District Council. How does that work? Well, the southern part is where we are at now. We're in the Waitomo District Council, and the northern part where Kawhia and Maketu Marae is sits in the Otorohanga District. With the connections between Waitomo and Otorohanga, maybe there could be an amalgamation there, and we have to talk to two different lots of people when we want kaupapa done.

Our hapu stretches across the harbour over to Kawhia. That's why Maketu is in the north, Aaruka here within Taharoa, and then Te Kooraha, which is you go through the beautiful mine and you head into Te Kooraha Marae there. Those are the three marae. Our principle marae, being Maketu, which is this one here. I don't want to point, but that one on the right, which has all our carvings and also carries the mana of our people in spaces like the poukai, with the Kīngitanga. The other marae, neighbouring marae, we go and help our principle marae. Maketu is our principle marae, followed by Te Kooraha, and then with OOpootiki Aaruka.

The marae, we're situated in these places because our whaanau grew up and lived in these particular areas. It was really difficult to get across to those spaces cos we're so isolated. Hence the reason the name Te Kooraha means isolation or the wilderness. The wilderness sounds more exotic [laughter].

We are connected just like how we are with the black sands in this whakataukī down the bottom, tini one pango, tino one tangata like many grains of black sand, so is our lineage. The black sand is us and we are the black sand. We come in different colours. Not all of us are black - all different shades. Nonetheless, if you haven't had black sand in your mouth, then you haven't been to Te Taharoa or if you haven't burnt your feet on the black iron sands, you haven't been to Te Taharoa. So, Te Taharoa is within us.

You would've heard also in our koorero and in our written stuff, Te Taharoa a Rua-puu-tahanga. We're sitting in Te Taharoa a Rua-puu-tahanga. Rua-puu-tahanga is one of our ancestors, who actually comes from the Taranaki area, and then Commissioner Williams, you brought up Tuurongo and Whatihua. Well, those two, they are tuakana teina. It's no secret, so I might tell the story. Tuakana was Whatihua and the teina was Tuurongo. Two brothers born from different wahine. Had one father, and as they grew up, they were always competing. Whatihua was born first; however, he was the son of the second wife, and Tuurongo was born second, but was the son of the highest or the first wife. So then there's

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tuakana teina debacle or tuakana teina experiments that were going back and forth.

Anyway, Tuurongo connects with a beautiful maiden, a beautiful wahine rangatira from Taranaki. Her name is Rua-puu-tahanga. They agreed to bring to Rua-puu-tahanga up to marry. Tuurongo said to his older brother, 'I've got a beautiful wahine coming up. Do you think I've got enough food in my mara?' He said, 'Yeah, you've got heaps of food'. Meanwhile, he was around the back making his mara and making more food. Likewise, he said, 'Oh, do I have enough room in my wharenuui to house all of her people?' The older brother, Whatihua, said, 'Yeah, of course, you've got heaps'. Meanwhile, he was around the back creating and building a bigger wharenuui.

Anyway, when she came up with her entourage and her people, Tuurongo ran out of space. He ran out of kai. It just so happened that Whatihua, the older brother, had everything. He had all the means, he had a nicer boat, he has plenty of kai, so the people of Taranaki then said, 'Wow, okay, girl, you're marrying the wrong person'. So, she married Whatihua instead.

Tuurongo, heartbroken, left to go to the east coast, and there he found his beautiful wahine, who's called Maahinaarangi. That's how we, as Tainui, connect to Te Tairaawhiti or the East Coast through Maahinaarangi and Tuurongo. If you go into Tuurangawaewae, one of the big wharenuui in Tuurangawaewae is called Maahinaarangi. There's that connection.

Come back to old Whatihua and his ways, Rua-puu-tahanga, realising she made the wrong choice, many, many years later, she decides to get out of here because she wasn't the number one wife. She was the second wife, so being a rangatira in herself, she decided I had enough of this, I'm going. I can see my maunga, Taranaki, he's calling out to me, so I'm going to head home. So, she trekked all the way down. Hot on her heels is Whatihua, realising his naughtiness, tried to catch up with her. They crossed over here. There's a little part there in the harbour where Te Maika is and up to Te Maika, across up Kawhia and Te Maika. Keep going up, up, further up, Melina [?: 10:25], up the entrance. Keep going up.

FEMALE VOICE: [overspeaking].

TAITUWHA KING: Yeah, up there, that entrance there, she swam across and Whatihua was hot on her heels. She came all the way through naming places as she went. She was carrying with her a calabash or a gourd, and the name of that gourd, as she was coming through this area was called a taha. It was

a long gourd, it was a taharoa, so we get Te Taharoa a Rua-puu-tahanga, Rua-puu-tahanga's gourd or Rua-puu-tahanga's calabash.

She carried on through. As she headed south, as you can see there, Melina's [?: 11:10] hand is going to head south, and she came just north of Marokopa actually to our whaanau from Te Nehenehenui from our whaanau from Maniapoto. Just north of Marokopa, there's a bay where it's hard to swim across if the tide is right. You can get across. Rua-puu-tahanga's crossed over and she saw Whatihua. He couldn't get over, so he finally gave up, and she said, 'You go back to Kawhia, look after our son, Uenuku, and I will head down to my own maunga'. There, she laid and spent her time, the rest of her time there. Our Taranaki whaanau, whenever we mention the word or the name Rua-puu-tahanga, their eyes light up because she was a rangatira in her own right, a tohunga in her own right.

That's how we get Te Taharoa a Rua-puu-tahanga, that story. Now I'm missing out a whole heap of stuff in between, but for this purpose, I'm just jumping over certain things. Even after our cup of tea or during our cup of tea, I was asked about where Ngaati Toa was. Thank you, commissioners. I said, 'The answer's coming'. This is after Rua-puu-tahanga and a lot of our people settled here. One of the main groups of people that started to get together comes from a famous ancestor called Toa Rangatira.

Toa Rangatira actually had her stronghold further south in Marokopa area. Anyway, from Toa Rangatira, you got a whakapapa down to this big chief called Te Rauparaha. Te Rauparaha ended up being the main chief or the main leader in this area from as far south as Marokopa, all the way up stretching to Whangaroa, which is Raglan. He's just touching on the southern part of Raglan. All of this area and also further across to Kawhia was his domain.

That was his domain and him and the likes of these rangatira, Rau-angaanga, which is Pootatau Te Wherowhero. He wasn't king at the time, but Pootatau Te Wherowhero was a young fella. His father was Te Rau-angaanga. You had all of these ones here, Pootata, Tuukorehu, Kiwi and the descendants of Kiwi are in here. Rangi-tuu-aatea, Te Kanawa, Te Awa-i-taia, Te Hiakai, they were all part of the Waikato Mahuta Maniapoto lineage.

They gathered together. They were all brought up here together. Te Rauparaha, they were all cousins. Te Rauparaha wanted to expand his empire and stretch further inland, stretching into Waitomo and further,

*Te Kooraha + Aaruka Marae,
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so getting further into the Maniapoto area and further north, starting to head into the Waikato area. His cousins didn't like that idea and told him to pull his head back in and he said, 'Jump in the lake'. And then one thing led to another and then war broke. There was a massive campaign, a massive campaign to get Te Rauparaha out or to Ngaati Toa out. That was between Waikato coming down from the north and also from the inland Waikato, from areas like Otorohanga, Pirongia as well. Pirongia, that area was where they gathered, the Waikato forces gathered. Maniapoto was coming up from the south or the east/south-east to do their campaigns.

Now you can see on some of these photos, some of these images here where those pins are. Those are all Te Rauparaha strongholds, so it was damn hard trying to get him out of here. You needed several battles all at the same time to get someone like that out because he was such a strategist. Well, they call him the Napoleon of the time, but I think Napoleon was the Te Rauparaha of the time.

All of those areas were part of Te Rauparaha's strongholds and the organising of the whole thing and getting them out was a feat in itself. Te Rauparaha had his escape route and that was south. He had his allies in Taranaki because he was getting hammered from the east, getting hammered from the north. He had his escape route, which is his back door, which is Taranaki.

The battles happened right on where you can see the mining, so we have some areas which our koiwi or the bones are found because of those battles. They're found in areas and there's an urupa right on where the area is. I'm not sure if you saw it. It's called Tauwhare, and that area, Tauwhare, is where if there's any discoveries, and men who can attest to that, who was designated as the kaumatua to go and take the bones if found and rebury them in Tauwhare, which is right next to the mine. That area has been sanctioned off. It's been fenced off.

To date, we're not too sure how the archaeological discovery protocols are as we haven't had any consultation with the hapu around that (with the mandated hapu that is). With regards to that, here are some of the battle sites: Te Kakara, where Te Rauparaha realised that it wasn't going to swing his way and he eventually ended up coming back this way. He was actually just over there. He was actually five minutes away on a little place called Te Kawau. Come through Pinapina, and he would have come straight across here where we are now and headed over through the hills to a place called Te Arawi. That's Te Arawi there, okay, from the aerial and Google and all that sort of stuff.

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If you go straight across, draw a straight line across there, you hit the sea and you'll run into this area where he was held captive there. Laid siege, sorry, not captive. He wasn't a captive. He laid siege there for two and a half weeks apparently according to the koorero, and Waikato and Maniapoto held him there. Weren't too sure whether or not, while we had a lot of people wanted to get him out and kill him, but then he had such great mana, they didn't want to kill him like a dog. They wanted to keep him fed, and what better thing to do to beat someone at their own game when they're fit and well, not when they're dying.

Such is the mana of this man and also the mana of our tupuna that allowed him to be fed and watered to be on there. There are over 200 people on that peninsula and you can't get on there only via a small track which is as long as this wharenuī to get on top of that. You can't climb the sides. You'd fall over.

It was organised that the waka they'd arrived in in the middle of the night, in the dead of night, and then he miraculously escaped. That's the story. There are other stories there, but pretty much that's the story, and as he turned the corner of Albatross Point, when you saw on the map, it's called Honipaka ... we've taken that name. We're trying to use that name rather than using the name Albatross Point because in his koorero, in his waiata, he composed the waiata at the time, and his words were *Tera ia nga tai o Honipaka Ka wehe koe. There lies the peninsula of Honipaka. I say my fair well, never to return again*

He headed south to Taranaki. He stayed there for a couple of years, generating and rebuilding his hapu and his people, and then he headed south. He headed south all the way down to Te Upoko o te Ika (Pooneke), Whanganui-aa-Tara, went across over to the South Island into the Kai Tahu area, and they weren't too happy about that, and finally settled where Ngaati Toa is now, Toa Rangatira in the Porirua area. And you can see, if you go to a place called Takapuwahia, which is one of their marae down in Porirua, a lot of the place names carry the names that I've just finished saying – Te Arawi and all of those. It's freaky. They took the names with them. Yeah, took the names with them.

So, bringing it back to here, this is the Marae Te Kooraha in particular. I can't talk about Aaruka because we're in Aaruka, but Te Kooraha here is one of the marae that you may not have been to. I just wanted to highlight and also show where the urupa is. On the current proposal in pit two, three and four, that Till's put up, hasn't gone through yet for the northern block, Te Wharangi, which is the urupa here sits right in the middle of all of the consents. It hasn't even been taken out.

I put a submission in with Te Taharoa C Block about three or four years ago, and they're still working at it, to get the urupa off the radar, off the radar of the mining. It concerns me. That's why I put that here. I'm wanting to put a boundary around the urupa, cos actually in the Māori Land Courts, the urupas is halfway because people die and the urupa extends, but not the boundary. The boundary is still there, 1960 something, but the urupa's almost doubled.

Some of the key areas of our kaitiakitanga, korotangi, which is the manu that guided the Tainui canoe, the Tainui waka to Aotearoa. Korotangi is prominent in our history, in our whakapapa. The top korotangi there is a replica of the korotangi which sits at the kura, Te Kura o Taharoa, which was commissioned to celebrate the 100 years. 100 years, was it? I can't remember exactly, but it's a prominent one for our tamariki and mokopuna to know that the korotangi is a prominent taonga for us.

And then the bottom one is the monument where the agreement between our tupuna, the mine site, and then at that time were the Japanese that were buying the iron sand. Okay, so it was New Zealand Steel, the Japanese and then the local hapu, which were our grandfathers, our great grandfathers. We are mokopuna tuarua tuatoru tuawha of those ones that had the original gentlemen's agreement. A lot of that wasn't written down. A lot of that, your kupu was mana. He tapu te kupu. That doesn't stand anymore. We know all that cos it's been passed down through generations. That's why we're still here, but in some areas, it's just words. It doesn't carry any weight. It carries huge weight for us.

And then so we have our taonga, our kai, our wai, our roto all in there with the tuna and piharau and the kooura, which are just one of many, many taonga. The kahawai, the kanae, which is the mullet that were prominent, and we're still doing tests in there to find out what's happening, why our tuna have parasites in there in them. Our long finned tuna and our short finned tuna in particular have parasites. We've just done the survey through Earth Sciences (originally NIWA). That mahi is ongoing. We've just finished a waterfowl hunt, research that determined whether or not the parasites are bird related, and we found some in some of the swans, the invasive swans that are out on the lake at the moment. We're still working through with DOC. We're doing a lot of mahi. Despite everything, we're doing a lot of mahi in and around our kaitiakitanga. That's through our marae, our three marae, our hapu, our te runanga and also Taharoa Lakes Trust.

Talked about that. And so, this is the last hei whakakapi I think. Our connection to the Kingitanga is prominent because Pootatau and his

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father were part of the leadership, how we came to get this whenua when Te Rauparaha left. Well, we have whenua.

I know Ngaati Toa has a different narrative, and I'm not going to whakaiti or takahi on Ngaati Toa's narrative because that's how awesome we are being Maaori. We have many versions, so which version is right? Well, all of them obviously. All of the versions are correct. It's about sitting down like this and having a koorero and having a wananga and working through our differences cos we've got differences. Of course, we have. We're just like every other whaanau in the world. Everyone has differences. We have our main kaupapa though, which is our kaitiakitanga and who we are.

We're Ngaati Mahuta ki te Hauaauru. We're represented, as I said before, by our three marae, our runanga as well, our lakes trust and many of the other trusts that you will hear today. We also carry kaupapa that are prominent in the Kīngitanga, which is the pokai at Maketu and the koroneihana or the coronation that is celebrated at Te Kooraha. We may be the poor cousin on the corner out on the coast, but nonetheless we like that position because we've been kaitiaki ever since for the last 300 years.

He whakamutanga. Commissioner Williams used the words, 'Kaare he hau e rite ana ki te hauaauru, ka pupuhi ana, ngaro katoa ngaa hau'. There's no wind like the west wind. When the west wind blows, all the winds are quiet, except if you're from Te Tairāwhiti when they just had some big massive winds out there.

I just wanted to finish off to read ... is that our position? I think I got our position. Hang on. I just wanted to read our position as well. I'm going to read it, so that I don't muck up the kupu, just as my last bit before I hand over.

Our position on behalf of Te Kooraha as well is that we don't support the substantive application in its current form and seek amendments to seek appropriate conditions. Ngaati Mahuta ki Te Hauaauru mana whenua through mandated marae representatives when speaking for the whenua, moana, wai, hau and the people of Taharoa. While C Block is the landowner entity, cultural mandate and mana whenua representations sit with Ngaati Mahuta ki te Hauaauru. The proposal adversely affects the ability of Ngaati Mahuta uri to exercise kaitiakitanga. It also restricts Ngaati Mahuta's relationship with our culture and traditions deeply connected to our ancestral lands, water sites, waihi tapu and other taonga.

Here's a big one. Consultation has not been sufficient.

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MALE VOICE: Tell us about it.

TAITUWHA KING: From the marae, we've had one official consultation. My idea of consultation is when you sit down and you koorero and you share ideas, not sit there for a two hour hui and then get the hui cut and you don't even get to say your bit. That's not consultation, so we haven't had consultation.

Several conditions imposed through the 2024 RMA Hearing Panel decision to address those environmental and cultural effects have been amended and/or removed. And just to taapiri atu hei korero whakamutunga. Our relationship with this whenua and the moana is founded on whakapapa ahikaa, tikanga and intergenerational responsibility. The whenua, the wai, the wetlands, the dunes and the moana are interconnected taonga. They can't be separated into isolated effects categories.

Cultural values are not confined to map sites alone. The entire landscape holds ancestral significance. Our responsibility is not only to present day uri and mokopuna but to future generations who will inherit the outcomes of these decisions.

Archaeological and cultural assessments did not adequately involve mandated mana whenua representatives kanohi ki te kanohi. Actually, we've already created a process regarding archaeological discoveries, and that's found in our EMP, which we launched at Maketu Marae 2025 (March). In there is a bible (or almost is a thesaurus) on how to work with us. It's already there. We're mandated and we follow that. The EMP (Environmental Management Plan) was created. It took two years to create by going around our hapu, our marae, talking to our old people, talking to our people about what our values, our beliefs are.

Mining activities across C Block, Central Block, Southern Block, Northern Block, Eastern Block and Te Mania are part of one ongoing and continuous mining presence. A lot of our whaanau, you'll hear today. Commissioners, you'll hear with the direct effects and they've got some perfect examples of what I'm saying. My koorero is broad and then will be dug deep into each of everyone's koorero as well.

Noo reira, ka tiaki i teenei waa ngaa korero, ka whakairia ake ngaa korero ki te paatuu o te whare. AA toona waa ka tikina atu teeraa koorero hei waananga maa taatou katoa. Thank you for the opportunity to wananga or what I like to say yaananga to you, commissioners. If you have any paatai, I'm not if I can answer them, but teenaa koutou, teenaa koutou, teenaa taatou katoa.

*Te Kooraha + Aaruka Marae,
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Speaker 2: Kia ora, Taituwha. Always important for everyone to be reminded of the whakapapa of your iwi and important also for the tamariki to be here to hear that and to be able to carry it forward. Thank you for your story that you have told on that and also for the summary of the position of the marae, which I recognise from your written statement. Thank you. I have no questions for you.

TAITUWHA KING: Kia ora.

Speaker 3: Kia ora taatou. I have a paatai about one of the points you raised, but firstly, just to acknowledge the rich history that you shared with us. It's a very generous thing to do, so we do appreciate that.

One of my tupuna hung out with Rauparaha for a while. I'm not sure if I should mention that, but he was down in Kapiti when he got a message to get his tinana up to Waitangi, and then three days later, we know what happened. He was given overnight to prepare Te Tiriti, but he'd been down with Te Rauparaha. I don't know how he got there in a week, but he did. Anyway, he might've been a bit tired.

Just by the by, the question is the comment that the mine restricts the ability to exercise kaitiakitanga and there's focus on conditions. Are there any ways through conditions frameworks that you see that kaitiakitanga could be better exercised, less restricted, whether that's through involvement in monitoring, whether that's through application of taonga species within cultural monitoring frameworks. Are they ways that can help reveal or be a practical expression of kaitiakitanga, and if so, how so?

TAITUWHA KING: Absolutely. That's what we've been asking for in the last so many years is to be part of that, is to be part of our kaitiakitanga, but we've never been approached or if things get into the too hard basket. As I set out in our EMP, I mean we've got it and even Te Nehenehenui has our EMP and our structures and our policies. They haven't once looked at it, not once looked at how we can engage. We're always open. We've always kept an open book, an open heart, open book to have engagement, meaningful engagement because we are the only ones that know this whenua cos we're born here.

We know how that sand works. We know that if you cut a hole in the hill, that sand is not going to grass over, simple things like that. I don't know if you want to have a look now, but there's a hill cut and it's already spilling into the neighbour's fence. We're going, why are you cutting like that cos if you'd only talked to the locals, you don't cut that. That's why our tupuna

made fences on top of the hill, not along the side cos when stock walks on it, it pushes the fence over. So, just those simple things.

Not only that, our kaitiakitanga of our taonga species, and I know Lloyd might talk about that, but the simple things is a moth. Our puurerehua, our green moths, puuriri, pepetuna. Pepetuna, I saw 16 of them in one ... it's hard seeing one, but I saw 16 of them one night all hovering around a light, one of the strong lights. What does that mean? Well, there's a whakapapa in our pepetuna. The whakapapa is what eats the pepetuna, what eats the puuriri is the pekepeke. How do the pekepeke find those puuriri is through sound cos they can't see it, but they can hear it. How can you hear something when you hear [makes thudding noise] all night? I know some whaanau were talking about that. From the pekepeke, what eats the pekepeke is the ruru. The ruru eat the pekepeke, so there's a whole whakapapa of our taonga. This is one example.

Don't let me get started on the tuna. I'm sure Ngahui are going to talk about the tuna, about our waterways, but that's what I mean. We have experts right here in this room that are able to advise, able to give that expert advice. Instead of having to go all the way outside the rohe, we've already got experts who are trained in those spaces. There's a lot of answers to that koorero but I guess we have trained people in our space that are not looked at because they're Ngaati Mahuta.

LLOYD HEPE:

Kia ora whaanau. Lovely to see everybody here today. Teenaa koe. Kia ora Uncle Maurice. Kia ora Diane, Aunty Diane.

I'm a descendant of those battles. I'm a descendant of the people that were told to stay here in Taharoa and look after this whenua. Don't let that sort of thing happen again. We don't need that. My grandparents were Piwa and Tua Peke [? 39:45]. My grandmother's name was Tawhi Rube [? 39:50]. I asked my grandmother one day, 'How did they decide who should stay here out of all the people that came here to move Te Rauparaha along?' My grandfather interjected and said, 'All the best fighters were told to stay here and look after this place'. My grandmother, she said (she had a habit of doing this), 'All the ones that they didn't want to go home, they told them to stay here'. That's us. My name is Lloyd Hepe.

Thank you, Jason, for that mahi, doing that for us. We're all one. This marae, Taharoa was a pa site. Taharoa people lived around here and they lived here because of this environment, protected by those hills, supplied by the puna that are around here. It was an ideal and appropriate place for us to live. Not just here, as we go to Kooraha, that's

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in the same environment, protected with the water there, the hills behind it. They knew what they were doing when they put places like that there, our people. There's a reason.

Hear that loud noise earlier on in the sky? I thought, shit, it's happening again. When I was a kid, we were playing on the side of the hill and this big noise came. We were wondering what the hell that was in the sky. It was an aeroplane, and we took off home to tell the old fella, 'This plane has come and has crashed into the lake'. We were going down to have a look at what happened and he told us to stay home. That's the first time I knew that we were starting to talk to people outside of Taharoa, and that a commercial operation was heading this way.

That was a sea plane. Never seen one before, and it landed in the lake. The first people that came here to koorero in those days arrived on that plane. From that day on, our people have been talking, talking and meeting. That's how this operation first came in, first I had a clue that this operation, mining, was coming to Taharoa.

We had no road here then. From that day on, I just wanted to point out through dialogue, through the ability to be able to talk, we are able to do things, but in so doing so, we're also able to make sure that whatever we do, we can protect things, like being able to look to the south, to our maunga down there, Taranaki. We went that way to look for a lot of things. We could see the weather coming. We could see the seasons of the year happening. We have a connection to people that way.

As Jason said, kua haere ki reira, that's where Rua-puu-tahanga headed to. We always look back to our people, our connection that way. We can't today. There's a big mountain of tailing sand being piled up. You used to be able to stand out the back, you'd look down there and you'd see the maunga. You can't see any of that now. It's sad. We can't see it anymore.

Oh, shit, I worked down here at the mine site. That was a hope of our people to get employment down there. If you weren't able to be employed, they were able to help us learn through implementing training things. I got my first job down there as a high school job, working for a company that made the first pipeline and towed it out to sea. Then I came back in 1974 and I had a few jobs down there moving around and learning. Others in the whaanau at the time were able to do the same. Others' whaanau, my uncles and that got other jobs too. While working there, it was good because we were able to see where they're heading and say, 'Hey, hang on. You don't want to go there because we got some reserved areas that you fellas might interfere with and that'. We worked together.

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At the moment, our people aren't there. There's new people down there working now, another iwi.

In those days, dignitaries that came here to talk about the sand and look at buying the sand, they all came through here, through the marae. This was the doorway in. They don't come here anymore. We don't know who's here, and it's our job to look after this place. Part of that job is to know who's in our whenua.

Through being able to koorero, this village came. We built us a football field. Our old field down in Pinapina started to flood because after the dam was put up, the lake level rose up. A bit hard to play a game down there. Used to be hard to go home too. If the other team turned up and they were a bit annoying, all these fellas wouldn't take them home. Maurice would've been one of the instigators. They had to put them on a boat and take them home.

We built the marae. We had koorero, and the company put on a town bus once a week, not just for the employees, but for all the people of this district to get a ride to town once a week, a bus to Te Awamutu. We had no shop, built us a shop. We asked about petrol, they installed a petrol pump. The cost of the milk and the bread, basic food items, we had koorero about that, and the company subsidised the food, the cost of bringing the food and the freight to the shop all for the betterment of the community, not just the employees. For our tamariki going to school, we asked koorero about things and we got school boarding fees. We got help in that area. We got a bus laid on to take the kids back to school after weekend set leaves. All these things come from being able to koorero and work together so that our people can still be here and maintain the mahi we were left here to do, look after this place, Taharoa.

We've got things going on now stops us in some ways, like being able to, like I mentioned about blocking our view towards Taranaki. We got a taonga there down at Mitiwai. We can't go and see her anymore. Access to that place has been denied. Those are the places we go to have our koorero, to work out our goal, looking after Taharoa.

A place called Tekau maa rua [? 49:31], these fellas turned up and built a whole lot of accommodation right there. I think that's pretty disrespectful. We have kaitiaki here, gazetted kaitiaki. We're concerned about what's going on on the foreshore, especially with all these new accommodation being put up there. Who's these people down there living down there now? They never talked to any of our kaitiaki about that carry on. Our job was to look after the foreshore and seabed. I'm a

representative of that for this marae, and there's other representatives for Te Kooraha.

I've been a lucky one as far as work goes down there. When I came back here, I started a job in the laboratory for a few years. I was a laboratory technician. Then, I got a job running the drilling operation. There's the mine path drill, all the areas that they wanted to mine, so they knew where was the right places, good places to mine. I was able to get a job, get an apprenticeship. Had the apprenticeship and became a diesel mechanic. In the end, I ended up being a head mechanic for the garage down there. Yeah, I was pretty lucky really. I worked in the mining part and became a dredge operator. Then, I moved up here and managed the maintenance for the Taharoa Village for quite a few years.

A lot of things happened while I was in those areas, and there were some nice things happened because we were able to have a koorero with the company at that time. This company was started by a man that got one of those ... what do you call it? Knighthoods. One of the first negotiators here. His name became Sir John Ingram, and part of his becoming Sir was because of the way he conducted himself and his koorero with indigenous people like us here at Taharoa. He's written numerous papers about how people should be consulted when you talk about using their land, and that word consultation always popped up.

Funny, I looked over here if you look at that photo up there on the wall, on that day, exactly what's happening here today, that's why those fellas are sitting there. There's some people coming onto the marae that day to talk about mining issues down here. Those old fellas, that's what they were doing that day, and here we are today. Kia ora.

[applause].

Speaker 3:

Okay kia ora, Lloyd, thank you for sharing that. It's been quite a feature of the application that there has been a positive. The application says there continues to be a positive relationship between the company and supporting infrastructure in the village and supporting employment in the village, wages, rentals, those sorts of things. We, as a panel, I meant to mention it before, the dominant purpose of the Fast Track Act is to promote projects that have significant benefits, so in the context of the question of benefits to the local Maaori community, something you said triggers a question in my mind, which I'm going to put to you and no doubt the Applicant would want to just respond in due course. You said another iwi is working here now and that the people, the mana whenua of this

place aren't working at Taharoa Mine. Is that correct? Can you just explain that a little bit more for me?

LLOYD HEPE: Kia ora. I'm talking about a number of our whaanau that had jobs here, don't work at the mine site anymore. From different ways, they have been released from their positions or asked to not come back. I was asked not to come back. I had mahi with a contractor, and the contractor got a message to say that they didn't want this employee back on their site.

Other thing I didn't probably say was I was an engineers' union delegate for quite a number of years at the mine site and party to a lot of these conversations about things for our people, like the petrol pump in the shop, the subsidies, buses and the school things and it. Things that suited worked out good for both the company and the people. Sometimes I had to talk to our people, our members, to change some of the ways they were performing or behaving as well, but it wasn't just one-way conversations.

Speaker 3: I mean, I don't want to drill into specific employment issues. That's not our job to get into all of that. I was just really wanting to understand are there still people that live in Taharoa Village or mana whenua that are working at the mine?

LLOYD HEPE: Yeah.

Speaker 3: But not to the extent perhaps previously?

LLOYD HEPE: No, definitely not like in the past.

Speaker 3: Thank you. Thank you very much.

FLEUR PASSAU: Sorry, just to end off Aaruka's koorero, I just want to state Aaruka Marae's position regarding community wellbeing and lived experience from Lloyd. Our position is that we do not support the substantive application in its current form and seek amendments and seek appropriate conditions.

The current economic and social benefits do not outweigh the adverse environmental and cultural effects experienced by mana whenua. We request that a strengthened and structured framework for engagement is imposed, which is necessary to mitigate the cultural effects of the consent, including providing for matters such as kaitiakitanga and maatauranga Maaori.

Finally, consultation has been insufficient. Proposed conditions do not appropriately respond to concerns raised, and we are concerned that culturally and community wellbeing will not be continued to be provided

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for as described in the application. I think the ngako of Lloyd's koorero is koorero.

LLOYD HEPE: Kia ora. Thank you for coming and giving us an opportunity to koorero. Nothing worse than going away and saying, 'Geez, I wish I could have been able to say something'. Kia ora.

FLEUR PASSAU: On that note, e te whaanau, Aunty Fi has asked that we have lunch no later 'til—

[End of Recorded Material: 58:54]