

Te Whiu Hapu Report – July 2011

Tena koutou Te Whiu

You will know that Chris Finlayson Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations appointed the Rt Hon Jim Bolger to facilitate discussions between Te Ropu o Tuhoronuku and Te Kotahitanga at a hui held yesterday at Te Tii.

I was pleased to be able to catch up with TeRau and a number of other Te Whiu hapu members who were also there. The earlier estimate of 300 attendees was probably not far from the mark.

My report to you includes my own personal observations and thoughts, as well as some information (the attached poll report) from Tuhoronuku. I am happy for you to widely distribute this email and information.

The Purpose of the Hui

The advertised purpose of the hui was the facilitation of discussions between Te Ropu of Tuhoronuku and Te Kotahitanga on a united approach to resolving Te Tiriti o Waitangi grievances within Ngapuhi. Te Kotahitanga presented first. On behalf of Tuhoronuku, Sonny Tau presented next.

Te Kotahitanga's Position at the Hui

A thing that struck me about the Te Kotahitanga presentation was that it echoed every point I had made in my submission of 24 February, a copy of which you all have seen. These points include: hapu are integral to and cannot be left out of the settlement process; and, claimants should be supported to have their claims heard, if they so wish. The very issues that concerned me are the same that appear to concern Te Kotahitanga and those hapu who presently support Te Kotahitanga's opposition of Tuhoronuku. Perhaps the difference is, I now fully understand and acknowledge that the Tuhoronuku process does in fact provide for those concerns.

Tuhoronuku's Position at the Hui

In his presentation to the hui, and quoting Boyd K Packer, Sonny warned that "fragments of truth perpetuate error". Sonny was followed by Lorraine Toki and Ben Dalton.

It is clear to me that until yesterday, many Ngapuhi had not the opportunity to hear the truth about Tuhoronuku. The truth is, Tuhoronuku does support the voice of hapu and it does support the hearing of claims. Having now been informed of the truth, there are many more like me who came away from the hui acknowledging that the Tuhoronuku process *istika*.

Jim Bolger summarised before lunch that there appeared to be more commonality than disagreement over our respective positions. I think Ben in his presentation hit the nail on the head in terms of what essentially are the two points of difference. The two things on which we don't have a common view are timing (of the settlement process) and control or leadership of it.

On that positive note, at least that's how I saw it, the hui broke for lunch. And indeed, during the lunch break I had a number of conversations with people who also saw it that way.

After Lunch

Jim Bolger, no doubt wishing to pick up on the positive elements of the morning, invited comment/questions from the floor that would help expand and further develop the commonalities. Unfortunately, despite the wise counsel of the facilitator, that didn't happen.

Immediately following Jim Bolger's suggestion, Te Kotahitanga put forward two speakers who continued their theme of the morning; that is, Tuhoronuku's process must be rejected.

My personal observation is that an opportunity was lost. One person in Jim Bolger's group later summarised the day as "a game of two halves". That's a well known and understood phrase to us all. All of us football experts know that to win such games it's important to be able to read the run of play and to change your game plan accordingly. It seemed to me that Te Kotahitanga had a game plan that they were adamant would be followed – no matter what - and that game plan's ultimate aim was to halt the Tuhoronuku process. Never mind that there was excellent information being shared; never mind that people's views were better informed; never mind that there was more than a glimmer of hope that common ground could be found there yesterday. And most of all, never mind that there are more than 120,000 Ngapuhi that were not able to attend the hui yesterday and they too have a right to be informed and exercise a choice.

My observation was that the plan to have the hui reject Tuhoronuku clearly failed. I think that was evident when during the hui an attempt was made to put a motion that the hui vote to support one or the other. This was clearly out of order and despite the direction of the facilitator the mover persisted. Buoyed by the nil response to "who votes for Tuhoronuku?" the mover then asked "who votes for Te Kotahitanga?" The response seemed to visibly deflate the mover. Hands went up alright, but clearly they represented a minority in the room. It is likely, I think, that some have underestimated – even disregarded – the silent majority of people who sat, said little, but thought a lot about what they were seeing and hearing.

But, as I have said, all of this is merely my personal opinion and observation. Nevertheless, I share it with you and I'm happy to account for it.

To summarise Tuhoronuku's stance after lunch, Sonny made it clear that we are willing to work with Te Kotahitanga. Nobody wants protracted discord. We wish for dialogue to continue. However, Tuhoronuku is clear: there are Ngapuhi people all over the *motu* and further abroad who deserve and are entitled to be involved. Sonny said that that being the case, Tuhoronuku was committed to its plan for mandating hui. Te Kotahitanga, despite earlier saying they had a process to follow such that they couldn't today make decisions on whether to work together, immediately replied that they'd just had a discussion amongst themselves (those sitting at the top table) and they would only work with Tuhoronuku only if Tuhoronuku that very day halted its plans for hui.

Sonny responded that Tuhoronuku would discuss Te Kotahitanga's position on that before replying further. The hui closed soon thereafter.

Tuhoronuku's Position Post-hui

Tuhoronuku representatives met immediately after the hui.

You will appreciate that it is not right for me to describe Tuhoronuku's decision prior to Sonny announcing it. However, please be assured that the decision was arrived at with integrity. It is one that I wholeheartedly support. You will hear more of this in the coming days, but I wanted to provide you with as much information as I could, as early as I could.

In the meantime, please see attached an interim report on a survey undertaken by Horizon. Its summary includes:

- 91% of those surveyed think that Ngapuhi should settle;
- 69% said they would support Tuhoronuku having a mandate to negotiate.

Obviously we, Te Whiu, are not alone.

Na reira, ka nui taku mihi ki a tatou. Kei wareware tatou i te korero o wa tatou matua tupuna, ko nga kupu wenei i tuhituhingaana i nga kohatu ki runga ki Rangaunu: "*i pupuri i nga tikanga o Te Tiriti o Waitangi, me te hapai hoki i te Whakapono*".

Kia tu tika ai te Whare Tapu o Ngapuhi.

Sam Napia