

# BOOK REVIEW

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*Ngāpuhi Speaks*. Huygens, Ingrid; Murphy, Takawai; & Healy, Susan. (2012). Whangarei, New Zealand: Network Waitangi Whangarei, Te Kawariki. 400 pp. ISBN 978-0-473-22981-8.

For many New Zealanders the Waitangi Tribunal is the respected independent body charged with uncovering “the facts” of New Zealand’s colonial history and assessing when and how the Treaty of Waitangi has been breached by Crown Ministers and officials. Others over time have contested the “independence” of the Tribunal and maintain that, firstly, there are massive imbalances in resources available to the Crown and Māori in preparing evidence, secondly, the Tribunal processes are inherently Pākehā so serve to marginalise Māori process and, finally, Māori evidence is frequently reframed and sanitised within Tribunal reports.

*Ngāpuhi Speaks* was commissioned by the kuia and kaumātua of Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu via Network Waitangi Whangarei as a unique parallel report to the forthcoming Waitangi Tribunal report on the major Ngāpuhi claim (WAI 1040). It was an attempt to ensure the evidence Ngāpuhi presented would be recorded in a manner that was tika. The report was compiled by an independent panel consisting of Pākehā and Māori Tiriti educators and scholars—Ingrid Huygens, Susan Healy and Takiwai Murphy—who, working in partnership with kuia and kaumātua from Ngāpuhi, oversaw the project with Network Waitangi Whangarei. Their substantial report summarises the evidence presented at the initial 5 weeks of the hearings.

The WAI 1040 claim seems likely to be one of the most significant of all the Waitangi Tribunal

claims to date as it specifically addresses the issues around the meaning and intentions of He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nū Tīreni 1835 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi 1840. The central tenet of the Ngāpuhi position, which Ngāpuhi convincingly argue, is that Ngāpuhi never ceded sovereignty to the Crown.

The report consists of several parts. Part A addresses the background and detail of He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nū Tīreni based on evidence provided by both Ngāpuhi and the Crown. Part B examines the evidence presented in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Part C reviews the effects of these divergent understandings from 1840 to the present day and explores their implications. Based on this assessment of the evidence, the authors then offer recommendations to the Crown, to Ngāpuhi nui tonu, to the people of Aotearoa, to the media and to Elizabeth II and her successors about how to proceed.

For any New Zealander with an interest in history, *Ngāpuhi Speaks* is a remarkable resource. Rather than another colonial history based on colonial sources, this report grants the reader unique access to a Ngāpuhi-centric history of He Wakaputanga and Te Tiriti. Within this report Ngāpuhi are presented as a well-organised, politically astute, independent, well-travelled and powerful collection of hapū. The report argues Ngāpuhi made a strategic collective political statement in both developing He Wakaputanga and entering into negotiations with the British resulting in Te Tiriti o

Waitangi to advance their political, social and economic aspirations.

The Ngāpuhi evidence was informed by analysis of scholars such as Manuka Henare and Erima Henare who revisited key primary documents in both English and te reo Māori, supplemented by oral histories from the descendants of those involved. The evidence they collected provides a convincing counterpoint to popular accounts of the context and detail of He Wakaputanga and Te Tiriti as championed by Keith Sinclair, Michael King and colleagues, whose scholarship now seems restricted by their (mis)understandings of te reo Māori and entrenched cultural viewpoints. This report, we suggest, sets a new standard in New Zealand history telling.

Huygens, Healy and Murphy are dedicated in their referencing throughout this report. Ideas are meticulously acknowledged to particular testimony to enable the readers to investigate sources for themselves and trace the thinking of their ancestors. Considerable care has been taken in the translation of te reo Māori, often including the interpretations of multiple scholars and/or kaumātua to provide a rich exploration of Māori terms and concepts. The depth of this work is a testimony to the integrity Huygens, Healy and Murphy have applied in undertaking what was clearly a labour of love.

For those of us present at some of the hearings, one thing struck: what this report does not capture is what it was like to be there and witness Ngāpuhi telling their story and in turn the Crown's stumbling response. Our recollections of the emotion-filled days were of how long and how patiently Ngāpuhi had been waiting to be heard by the Crown. Virtually everyone we spoke to at the hearings was a descendant from somebody directly involved with either He Wakaputanga or Te Tiriti. We witnessed a giant sad/proud whānau reunion rich in humour, passion, ceremony, waiata and the ardent pursuit of long-withheld justice.

With respect to the methods used, *Ngāpuhi Speaks* demonstrates a complex application

of kaupapa Māori theory and its intersection with Pākehā Tiriti work. It could also be seen as an exemplar of both activist scholarship (with its social justice agenda and horizontal dialogue with activists) and critical race theory (through the use of master and counter narratives). Regardless of the methodological perspective chosen, these reviewers are eager to see follow-up publications exploring issues of methodology and method in relation to this project so others can benefit from the learnings of this clearly important work.

For Pākehā Tiriti educators, *Ngāpuhi Speaks* provides a new depth of Māori analysis around the details of He Wakaputanga and the history associated with the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It represents Māori as powerful active agents in their own destiny and fractures the master narrative of Māori as uneducated, unworldly victims of European civilisation. Having this resource will enable Pākehā educators to field those gnarly historic questions with confidence.

Our congratulations go to the report authors and those that drove this project. It is a remarkable piece of work that many New Zealanders would benefit from reading and will prove a useful addition to tertiary institutions' recommended reading lists.

## Review authors

Heather Came, Lecturer, Department of Community Health and Development, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. Email: Heather.came@aut.ac.nz

Susan da Silva, Lecturer, Creative Industries and Humanities, Northtec, Whangerei, New Zealand. Email: sasilva@northtec.ac.nz

**Glossary**

hapū	sub-tribe	Ngāpuhi nui tonu	everlasting Ngāpuhi (one of the titles by which Ngāpuhi is known)
He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nū Tīreni	Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand	Pākehā	settler
kaumātua	elders	te reo Māori	Māori language
kuia	female elders	tika	correct
Ngāpuhi	iwi (tribe) located in the Northland region of New Zealand	Te Tiriti o Waitangi	the Māori text of the Treaty of Waitangi
		whānau	extended family