

Ngāti Patumoana focusing on the future and Settlement

Earlier this week, a statement was made that Challenged the Crown and their support of the Whakatōhea Pre-Settlement Claims Trust (WPCT). The release stated that the claimants spoke on behalf of Ngāti Patumoana.

Graeme Riesterer, Chairman of Ngāti Patumoana, and Chairman of the Whakatōhea Pre-Settlement Claims Trust says that is not the case.

“Allegations have been made that our hapū, Ngāti Patumoana, do not support Settlement nor the Whakatōhea Pre-Settlement Claims Trust. We absolutely refute that. This claim has never been brought to any of our hapū hui for discussion. This is the opinion of a couple of lone wolves who do not, and have never had, the consolidated position of our hapū. We made a conscious decision to support Settlement with the specific purpose of our Ngāti Patumoana hapū trustees, to sit upon the WPCT and progress and support this kaupapa.

We understand that some of our whānau may have different views around the Whakatōhea Settlement. However, those who did not support Settlement previously, their main argument was to hold a Waitangi Inquiry before proceeding with Settlement.

In December 2019 it was announced that a Waitangi Tribunal Inquiry would happen, in parallel to Settlement negotiations. This is a New Zealand first. Whakatōhea whānau get to Settle and still have our stories told in the Waitangi Tribunal. This is a win win, we have always been in support of our whānau who wanted a Waitangi Tribunal Inquiry.

So, for these same whānau to say that Ngāti Patumoana do not support the Whakatōhea Pre-Settlement Claims Trust, and Settlement, is not only wrong but disingenuous and deceitful.”

Hapū hui are held monthly at Waiaua marae. Graeme says that all whānau with views for and against Settlement can come and have their say. Get educated around what this Settlement is, and what it will mean for Ngāti Patumoana and Whakatōhea as a whole.

“As a hapū, we are focused on the future and Settlement. With the Crown investing in the Ōpōtiki harbour development, Whakatōhea can take advantage of this by creating our own Aquaculture ventures which will benefit all Whakatōhea. The Aquaculture industry is a Billion Dollar global industry. If we do not Settle now, it will be another 10-20 years and these opportunities that once existed for Whakatōhea will be forfeit and taken advantage of by others.

There are many of us who have been involved with a Whakatōhea Settlement from the start, back to the 1980's. I am one of them. I can see huge benefits to my whānau and Whakatōhea to be able to Settle. It would mean so much, to so many of us”.