



OPEN LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT

National Iwi Chairs call for Rāhui to be legally recognised

10 January 2022

Rt. Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

E te Pirimia, Tēnā Koe

Tuia te rangi e tuu

Tuia te papa e takoto

Tuia ngaa mate o te waa hei kura tangihia maa te iti me te rahi.

Tuia taatou ngaa waihotanga iho hei manaaki, hei tiaki i ngaa taonga whakaheke i ngaa maatua tuupuna.

Teena taatou i teenei te Tau Hou.

Teena taatou i teenei ngaa kaupapa o te waa.

On behalf of the National Iwi Chairs Forum, representing 80 iwi throughout Aotearoa, we are writing to advise you of our concern in the way rāhui are being disrespected and ignored over sites of significance, our water ways, land and forest. Of particular concern is where there has been loss of life and people continuously using the area before the rāhui has been lifted. Ahimate River claimed four lives – four too many, a rāhui was placed over the area only to be ignored.

A rāhui may be imposed for many reasons, including a need for conservation of food, resources or because of a recent death in the area, out of respect for the dead and to prevent the gathering of food or use of that area for a specific period.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and legislation (the RMA), requires the government to adhere to customary directives of hapuu and Māori, for the specific role of iwi as kaitiaki of our natural resources – this is being ignored.

Currently, the imposing of rāhui by Māori iwi has no official legal standing, and penalties are not formally imposed upon anyone breaking a rāhui, despite this being culturally insensitive to do so.


It is one thing to call on Māori to participate in the ancient rituals of karakia to bless events and sites and quite another to ignore and at times support ignoring the ancient rituals of rāhui.

What needs to change? This is not a matter on which we will 'sit on the fence'. It is no longer acceptable to have our tikanga ignored and disrespected particularly when our tikanga benefits all peoples not just Māori. Moreover, the National Iwi Chairs Forum will defend the right for whaanau, hapuu and iwi to exercise their tikanga for rāhui to be recognised and acknowledged. It is time rāhui was given official legal standing within the Pākehā legal system.

Nga mihi



Rahui Papa
Co-Chair
Pou Tangata Co-Chair



Kahurangi Dame Rangimarie Naida Glavish
Co-Chair
Pou Tangata



Professor Margaret Mutu
Chair
Pou Tikanga

Cc:

Hon Grant Robertson – Minister for Finance

Hon Kelvin Davis – Minister for Crown Maaori Relations

Hon Nanaia Mahuta – Minister for Local Government & Foreign Affairs and Trade

Hon Carmel Sepuloni – Minister for Social Development and Employment

Hon Peeni Henare – Minister for Whānau Ora

Hon Kiritapu Allen – Minister for Conservation

Hon Willie Jackson – Minister for Māori Development

Hon Meka Whitiri – Associate Minister for Statistics

Te Paati Maori Members of Parliament, Debbie Ngarewa-Packer and Rawiri Waititi

The Governor General, Her Excellency, The Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro

The Office of the Ombudsman