



Deed of Settlement

BETWEEN THE CROWN AND NGĀTI RUAPANI MAI WAIKAREMOANA

General background

Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana are a large natural group of approximately 3,500 people and their area of interest is centred around Lake Waikaremoana.

In October 2019, the Crown recognised the mandate of the Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana Negotiating Group to negotiate a comprehensive historical Treaty settlement.

The Crown signed Terms of Negotiation with Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana on 19 March 2020. On 27 August 2022, the Crown and Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana signed an Agreement in Principle, which formed the basis for this settlement.

On 20 November 2025, Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana and the Crown initialled a Deed of Settlement, which was then ratified by the people of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana and signed at [Location]. The settlement will be implemented following the passage of settlement legislation.

The Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana – Te Tari Whakatau, with the support of the Department of Conservation, Tōitu Te Whenua – Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), and other government agencies, represented the Crown in day-to-day negotiations.

The Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, Hon Paul Goldsmith (and his predecessor Hon Andrew Little), represented the Crown in high-level negotiations with Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana.

Summary of the historical background to the claims of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana

Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana did not sign te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and the Crown had no official presence in Te Urewera until the 1860s. The first substantial contact between Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana and the Crown was the Crown's armed attacks on Te Kōpani and Onepoto in 1866. Attacks on Waikaremoana settlements continued between 1869 and 1871. The Crown unfairly treated Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana as rebels, with dire consequences, including loss of life and land. Crown forces used scorched earth tactics, destroying kāinga and crops, and stole horses, cattle, and food supplies. These acts resulted in starvation and exposure that contributed to many deaths among Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana.

In 1871, the Crown entered into a peace compact with Te Urewera Māori. The Crown agreed to withdraw from Te Urewera and let Te Urewera Māori manage their own affairs. The following year, Te Urewera rangatira, including those from Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana, united as Te Whitu Tekau to assert their mana motuhake in Te Urewera. However, the Crown did not formally recognise Te Whitu Tekau and had little regard for their opposition to the Native Land Court and its surveys. Between 1868 and 1890, Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana could not prevent more than 100,000 acres in which they asserted customary interests passing through the court. This process converted customary title into individualised land ownership and undermined tribal structures and collective decision making. Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana lost land, including land in the Waipaoa block and interests in Lake Waikareiti.

In 1875, the Crown, unfairly claiming Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana had earlier rebelled against the Crown, threatened to confiscate their interests in the “four southern blocks” of 178,000 acres south of Lake Waikaremoana. Under duress, Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana agreed to withdraw their claims in return for a payment and 2,500 acres of reserves.

In an 1895 compact, the Crown agreed to respect the mana motuhake of Te Urewera Māori and to establish an inalienable 656,000-acre reserve. The compact formed the basis for the Urewera District Native Reserve Act 1896, which provided for local self-government within the reserve by Te Urewera Māori. Over the next 2 decades, the Crown delayed implementing the Act, undermined its protective provisions and promoted unilateral changes to it. The Act was ultimately repealed in 1922.

For many years, the Crown made repeated attempts to purchase interests in the Waikaremoana block, the last substantial landholding of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana. In 1921, as part of the Urewera Consolidation Scheme, the Crown put considerable pressure on Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana, including threatening to compulsorily acquire land in the Waikaremoana block. Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana reluctantly agreed to sell their interests in the block, but the Crown did not honour all the sale conditions. It reduced the purchase price paid to most owners, and for many years deferred repaying money it owed them, causing considerable hardship. The Crown also set aside only 600 acres of lakeside reserves.

By 1925, Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana retained only 2,490 acres in small reserves. For several decades, the Crown restricted the ability of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana to develop their remaining lands or derive an income from them. It also took land for public works, despite knowing Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana were struggling to sustain themselves.

In 1954, the Crown established Te Urewera National Park without consulting Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana. The park completely enclosed the Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana lakeside reserves, and park policies restricted their customary use of Te Urewera. The Crown also included Lake Waikaremoana in Te Urewera National Park without Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana consent. Title to the lakebed had been awarded to Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana and other groups in 1918, and confirmed on appeal in 1944. In 1954 the Crown decided to not further contest the title. To generate hydroelectricity, the Crown had, from the 1920s, modified the lakebed as if it owned it, and lowered lake levels, causing erosion, and reducing fish stocks. In 1971, the Crown agreed to lease the lakebed but did not compensate the owners for its many uses of it before 1967, a loss of income that Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana sorely needed.

Decades of Crown land acquisitions had left Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana virtually landless by 1895. They have suffered from severe socio-economic deprivation. The Crown did little to alleviate these conditions and, at times, contributed to them. Further, the Crown sought to assimilate Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana into European culture and encouraged Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana to migrate from their traditional lands following World War II. Those who moved away have been disconnected from their tikanga, tūrangawaewae, and whānau.

Despite this deprivation and disconnection, Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana have endured. They are resolute and tenacious in their connections to Waikaremoana.

Overview

The Deed of Settlement is the final settlement of all historical Treaty of Waitangi claims of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana resulting from acts or omissions by the Crown prior to 21 September 1992, and is made up of a package that includes:

- an agreed historical account, Crown acknowledgments and apology;
- cultural redress; and
- financial and commercial redress.

The benefits of the settlement will be available to all members of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana wherever they may live.

Crown acknowledgements and apology

The Deed contains a series of acknowledgments by the Crown for its acts and omissions that have breached the Crown’s obligations under te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles. It also contains an apology from the Crown for these breaches. Specific breach acknowledgements in the deed include:

- the Crown’s attacks on kāinga, such as Te Kōpani in 1866, and its use of a ‘scorched earth’ policy, which showed ruthless disregard for the survival and wellbeing of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana and left a legacy of intergenerational trauma and destruction;
- taking land at Onepoto in 1872 without compensation;
- the acquisition of approximately 178,000 acres in the four southern blocks in southern Waikaremoana, after threatening to confiscate interests in this land;
- the Crown’s failure to protect Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana from becoming virtually landless;
- pressuring Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana into allowing their interests in the Waikaremoana block to be included in the Urewera Consolidation Scheme; and
- the Crown’s failure to respect Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana rangatiratanga by administering the Waikaremoana lakebed as if it were Crown property, and not paying any rent for this land before 1967.

Cultural redress

Cultural redress is intended to recognise the cultural, historical, and traditional associations of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana within their area of interest.

VESTING OF LAND IN NGĀTI RUAPANI MAI WAIKAREMOANA

Two site of cultural significance Turi-o-Kahu and Kaitawa, comprised of four parts of Onepoto Conservation Area and one LINZ property, will be transferred to Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana unencumbered as cultural redress to support their aspirations for housing development and cultural reconnection.

A map of these properties is available in the Attachments Schedule.

RESTORATION OF LAND INTO TE UREWERA

Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana have an innate connection with Te Urewera. A key aspiration for Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana is to see Crown-owned land in their area of interest returned into Te Urewera where it will be protected for future generations of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana.

In recognition of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana’s aspirations, 18 properties currently held by the Crown will be added to Te Urewera through specific provisions in the Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana settlement legislation.

PLACE NAME CHANGES

Place names recognise iwi associations with geographic areas. 6 original place names will be restored through the settlement.

Current name	Proposed name	Category
Tuai	Tūwai	Locality
Unnamed	Ngā-Hina-o-Te-Pūrewa	Miscellaneous
Puna Hokoi	Puna-hōkio	Miscellaneous
Puna Teao	Puna-te-ao	Miscellaneous
Hopuruahine Landing	Hopuāruahine	Miscellaneous
Hopuruahine Stream	Hopuāruahine Stream	Stream

Financial and commercial redress

The financial and commercial redress is intended to provide Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana with resources to assist them to develop their economic and social wellbeing.

FINANCIAL REDRESS

Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana will receive financial redress of \$24 million less the value of the Crown interest in Patunamu Forest Limited, in addition to the value of the former Tuai Hostel (Lake Whakamarino Lodge) and the settlement date properties below.

COMMERCIAL REDRESS

Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana will receive the right to purchase these properties under the following conditions:

- 1 Deferred selection property with rights of first refusal:
 - › Kaitawa Administration Properties;
- 1 Sale and leaseback property:
 - › Te Kura o Waikaremoana;
- 2 Right of first refusal properties:
 - › 63 Hill Street Tuai;
 - › Kāinga Ora Property, Tuai.
- 3 Settlement date properties:
 - › Camp Kaitawa;
 - › Former Tuai School;
 - › Section 9 Property.

Questions and Answers

1. What is the total settlement package?

- Crown acknowledgements and apology for historical breaches of te Tiriti o Waitangi the Treaty of Waitangi
- An agreed historical account
- Cultural redress includes the return of one site within the Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana area of interest and the addition of 18 properties to Te Urewera.
- Financial redress of \$24 million less the value of the Crown interest in Patunamu Forest Limited and the value of any settlement date properties, in addition to the value of the former Tuai Hostel.
- Commercial redress including the right to purchase a number of sites throughout the Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana area of interest and the right of first refusal over a number of Crown properties

2. Is there any private land involved?

No.

3. Are the public's rights affected?

Yes. 1 conservation site being returned will be transferred in fee simple not subject to reserve status.

4. Are any place names changed?

Yes, 6 geographic place names will be changed.

5. What happens to memorials on private titles?

The legislative restrictions (memorials) placed on the title of Crown properties and some former Crown properties now in private ownership will be removed within the Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana area of interest once legislation for the Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana settlement bill has passed.

6. When will the settlement take effect?

The settlement will take effect following the enactment of the settlement legislation.

7. Is Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana able to come back and make further claims about the behaviour of the Crown in the 19th and 20th centuries?

No. When the Deed is signed and settlement legislation is passed it will be a final and comprehensive settlement of all historical (relating to events before 21 September 1992 Treaty of Waitangi claims of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana).

The settlement will still allow Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana to pursue claims against the Crown for acts or omissions after 21 September 1992 including claims based on the continued existence of aboriginal title of customary rights. The Crown also retains the right to dispute such claims or the existence of such title rights.

8. Who benefits from the settlement?

All members of Ngāti Ruapani mai Waikaremoana, wherever they may now live.

This and other settlement summaries are also available at www.govt.nz

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government