



TE RŪNANGA O NGĀTI AWA

19 December 2010

Attention: Michael Coles (Advisory)

Local Government Commission
PO Box 5362
Wellington 6145

Tena koe

PROPOSAL FOR TRANSFER OF RANGITAIKI WARD AREA FROM THE WHAKATANE DISTRICT TO THE KAWERAU DISTRICT

This is the submission of Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa. This submission promotes the involvement of Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa in the decision making process for the proposed Rangitaiki Ward transfer on the basis that the Ngāti Awa community within the Rangitaiki Ward is a distinct community of interest and Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa is the Iwi Authority that represents that community.

Ngāti Awa - A Distinct Community of Interest

Members of Ngāti Awa comprise a distinct community interest in the Whakatane District and the Rangitaiki Ward in particular. This distinctiveness arises from the long standing historical association with this area, the number of Ngāti Awa cultural institutions within the Ward and the numbers of resident proportion in the district.

In summary:

- Over 18,700 people are registered as Ngāti Awa with Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa (Ngāti Awa Registrations Database).
- The resident Ngāti Awa population in the Whakatane district is 3,723, more than 10% of the total district population (2006 Census).
- The resident population of Ngāti Awa within the Kawerau District is over 1,150 (2006 Census)
- Ngāti Awa is the second largest iwi by resident population in both the Whakatane and Kawerau Districts (behind Tuhoē).
- Ngāti Awa is one of only two settled iwi in the Whakatane region with statutory areas within the Rangitaiki Ward. A further four iwi with land within the Rangitaiki Ward are in the process of negotiating settlements (CNI deal).

About the Runanga

Te Runanga o Ngati Awa is an iwi authority based in the Whakatane District. The Runanga represents 18000 uri (descendants) of Ngati Awa. Ngati Awa people are tangata whenua, kaitiaki, landowners and ratepayers within the eastern Bay of Plenty region, Whakatane, Kawerau and Opotiki Districts.

The Runanga is a governance entity representing 22 hapu with cultural and historical connections within the Rangitaiki Ward. Of the 22 hapu, 17 are physical located within the Rangitaiki Ward with a further two co-located in the ward and elsewhere (Motiti). Of the 19 marae of Ngati Awa 16 are located within the Rangitaiki Ward. While Ngati Awa maintains strong cultural connections to the Kawerau District there are no hapu or marae physically located within that district.

Major Ngati Awa trusts and incorporations are located within the Rangitaiki Ward including Putauaki Trust, Omataroa-Rangitaiki, Kiwinui and others. In addition the Runanga is a land owner in its own right.

Through the Ngati Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005 and the Ngati Awa Deed of Settlement Ngati Awa has statutory recognition to various areas within the Rangitaiki Ward (see attached map). These include:

- Tarawera River and tributaries
- Rangitaiki River and tributaries
- Whakatane River and tributaries
- Two Nohoanga sites, one at each of the mouths of Tarawera and Rangitaiki rivers
- Various reserves at Matata and Manawahe
- Part of the Kaingaroa Forest and Bonisch Road in the upper Rangitaiki catchment
- Rotoehu East and Rotoehu West Forests

As a result of these matters Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa in its own right and on behalf of its members is an affected party to this proposed change.

Relevant matters

The Commission has identified seven questions that it will consider in making a decision on the proposal. As a general observation we note that the 21 issues lodged in support of the proposed petition for transfer do not appear to be relevant to the matters for consideration by the Local Government Commission.

However the Runanga makes the following submissions:

(a) Ngati Awa as a community of interest

As noted above Ngati Awa is a distinct community of interest within the Whakatane District and Rangitaiki Ward in particular. Currently all Ngati Awa hapu and marae are located within the Whakatane District. The proposed ward transfer will result in most hapu and marae of Ngati Awa being transferred to the Kawerau District.

This has implications for the hapu and Runanga:

- The cost and complexity of representation for Ngati Awa hapu and marae across two council jurisdictions.
- The separation of Ngati Awa hapu and marae across two councils.
- Consistency of application of Ngati Awa kaitiaki principles across different regulatory environments.

The Runanga would need to understand how the distinct Ngati Awa community of interest was protected and/or enhanced by this proposal.

The transfer may also have the result of reducing the influence of Ngati Awa within one of its home regions as only one hapu will be based in the Whakatane District.

(b) More effective representation?

While there are significant numbers of Ngati Awa members living in the Kawerau District (more than 1,000) the Runanga does not have a well developed relationship with Kawerau District Council. The Kawerau District Council has in the past generally deferred to Ngati Tuwharetoa ki Kawerau as tangata whenua.

It is not clear at this stage whether the Kawerau District Council understands or is prepared for the need to establish a formal relationship with Te Runanga o Ngati Awa. Therefore the Runanga would need to understand how the proposed change would result in more effective representation for the Ngati Awa population living in Kawerau currently not to mention the proposed transfer of further Ngati Awa people and marae to the Kawerau District.

Submission

There is insufficient information either from the proposer or from either local authority about whether the transfer would result in better recognition or improved representation for the Ngati Awa community of interest.

THEREFORE

Te Runanga o Ngati Awa opposes the proposed transfer on the basis that there is insufficient information to assess whether the transfer will result in either:

- **better recognition of Ngati Awa as a distinct community of interest or**
- **more effective representation for Ngati Awa as a distinct community of interest.**

As an iwi authority, and representing a significant community of interest the Runanga submits that the Commission must ensure that the Runanga is involved in any decision-making body established to consider the transfer.

Please note that individual members of Ngati Awa may hold a different perspective on the proposal based on their individual circumstances. Te Runanga o Ngati Awa supports their right to make comment from that perspective.

Te Runanga o Ngati Awa also wishes to be heard at any hearing on this matter.

Naku noa, na
TE RUNANGA O NGATI AWA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JG', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeremy Gardiner
CHIEF EXECUTIVE