

RANGAHAUA WHANUI DISTRICT 9

THE WHANGANUI DISTRICT

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WORKING PAPER: FIRST RELEASE

WAITANGI TRIBUNAL
RANGAHAUA WHANUI SERIES

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FOREWORD

The research report that follows is one of a series of historical surveys commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal as part of its Rangahaua Whanui programme. In its present form, it has the status of a working paper: first release. It is published now so that claimants and other interested parties can be aware of its contents and, should they so wish, comment on them and add further information and insights. The publication of the report is also an invitation to claimants and historians to enter into dialogue with the author. The Tribunal knows from experience that such a dialogue will enhance the value of the report when it is published in its final form. The views contained in the report are those of the author and are not those of the Waitangi Tribunal, which will receive the final version as evidence in its hearings of claims.

Other district reports have been, or will be, published in this series, which, when complete, will provide a national theme of Maori loss of land and other resources since 1840. Each survey has been written in the light of the objectives of the Rangahaua Whanui project, as set out in a practice note by Chief Judge E T J Durie in September 1993. The text of that practice note is included as an appendix (app II) to this report.

I must emphasise that Rangahaua Whanui district surveys are intended to be one contribution only to the local and national issues, which are invariably complex and capable of being interpreted from more than one point of view. They have been written largely from published and printed sources and from archival materials, which were predominantly written in English by Pakeha. They make no claim to reflect Maori interpretations: that is the prerogative of kaumatua and claimant historians. This survey is to be seen as a first attempt to provide a context within which particular claims may be located and developed.

The Tribunal would welcome responses to this report, and comments should be addressed to:

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Suzanne Cross graduated with an MA in history (first class honours) from Auckland University in 1993. Her MA thesis was entitled 'Muru me te Raupatu: Confiscation, Compensation, and Military Settlement in North Taranaki, 1863–1880'. She worked as a historical researcher for the Crown Congress Joint Working Party, investigating Maori claims to surplus railway lands in the Whanganui district, from March to June 1993, when the organisation was closed down.

At the beginning of July 1993, Suzanne Cross was commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal to write a broad overview of the Whanganui district. That overview forms part I of this report and covers the years 1840 to 1907.

Brian Bargh

Brian Bargh is a consultant historian and policy analyst. He holds a masters degree in agricultural science and has worked for several years within the Government on issues relating to the Treaty of Waitangi and the settlement of Maori claims. He has extensive experience in environmental science and the management of natural resources.

In September 1994, the Waitangi Tribunal commissioned Brian Bargh to prepare an overview report on the Whanganui district. His commission forms part II of this report and covers the years 1907 to 1990.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR	<i>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</i>
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
BPP	<i>British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies New Zealand</i> (Shannon, Irish University Press)
CCJWP	Crown Congress Joint Working Party
ch	chapter
doc	document
fig	figure
fn	footnote
MB	minute book
NA	National Archives
NZJH	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
NZPD	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
p	page
ROD	record of documents
s	section (of an Act)
sec	section (of this report, or of an article, book, etc)
sess	session

WAI NUMBERS

As each claim is registered by the registrar of the Waitangi Tribunal, it is given a number for filing purposes. Numbers are assigned chronologically according to dates of registration and each number carries the prefix ‘Wai’. Claims are then commonly referred to by their ‘Wai number’ and this convention is followed in this report. For example, Wai 167 is the main claim concerning the ownership of the Whanganui River and Wai 221 is a claim concerning the North Island main trunk railway lands.

As material pertaining to a claim is submitted to the Tribunal, it is entered on the record of documents for that claim. These records are held at the Tribunal's offices in Wellington and, apart from certain confidential material, are available for public inspection.

PREFACE

This report is part of a national research project instituted by the Waitangi Tribunal entitled ‘Rangahaua Whanui’, which, when complete, will provide district comparisons, along with a national overview, of Maori grievances and the extent and impact of resource loss.

Part I, written by Suzanne Cross, covers the events leading to the loss of land and other resources by Maori of the Whanganui district from 1840 to 1907. Part II, written by Brian Bargh, continues the account of these resource losses to 1990.

The boundaries of the Rangahaua Whanui districts were set by the Waitangi Tribunal and were based on local government boundaries. The boundaries of district 9, the Whanganui district, stretch inland from the coast at Maxwell to the Whanganui River, follow the river to Whakahoro, run across to Mount Ruapehu through the Waimarino block, travel up to the Rangipo area, and then follow the Turakina and Whangaehu Rivers back to the coast (see fig 1).

Part I

Part I of this report deals with the period from 1840 to the 1907 Stout–Ngata commission. It does not pretend to be a comprehensive or detailed examination of all the issues relating to resource loss and Maori grievances in the district. In view of the limited time-frame of eight months, this was an impossible task. Rather, this report provides a broad overview of events, focusing on a small number of issues in more detail, such as the New Zealand Company purchase and leasing in the Murimotu district. It was not feasible to investigate all the issues. In particular, there has been no assessment of the grievances relating to the Whanganui River. I did not feel that I could do justice to these grievances as a section of this report – they really deserve a report of their own. Furthermore, this report cannot be said to represent a Maori perspective of the history of this district, that being the domain of claimant researchers.

Suzanne Cross

Part II

Chapters 8 to 13 deal with the continuing alienation of land by Maori in the Whanganui district after 1906, while chapters 14 and 15 give a summarised account of the struggle between the Crown and Whanganui Maori over the ownership of the Whanganui River, and chapter 16 summarises the claims to the Waitangi Tribunal concerning the district.

The total area owned by Whanganui Maori in 1840 (their rohe), including what was later to be known as the Waimarino block, bounded in the north by the Whanganui River catchment area (see map 5), was approximately 1.77 million

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acres. The Rangahaua Whanui district boundary shown on map 1 encloses an area of about 1.2 million acres. By 1907, approximately 70 percent of the land and forests that had been the tribal property of the Whanganui people had been acquired by the Crown or on-sold to private individuals. Similarly, Suzanne Cross reports in part I that, by 1907, 70 percent of the Rangahaua Whanui district had been alienated.

In 1907, farming, tourism, the logging of native forests, and road and railway maintenance were the predominant activities in the district. The Native Minister was James Carroll. Carroll, a Maori, had been a member of Seddon's Liberal Government in 1899, when it had agreed, as a result of pressure exerted by the Kotahitanga movement, to reduce Maori land purchasing and recognise Maori demands for limited autonomy.¹ The effects of these policy changes are discussed in this report.

The Maori population of the district in 1907 was around 1850 and falling – in contrast to the national Maori population, which was beginning to stabilise, and even rise in some areas, after years of decline. The reasons for this regional trend are also discussed.

Brian Bargh

1. John Williams, *Politics of the New Zealand Maori*, Auckland, Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1968