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Māori Aspirations, Crown Response and Reserves, 1840 to 2000 (Wai 2200, #A213)

Summary

This report is a study of the areas of land – commonly known as 'reserves' – that were set apart for the hapū and iwi of Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata as part of the Crown's land purchasing process. North of the Manawatū River most of the Māori land purchased by the colonial government was acquired in four large Crown purchases: the Rangitīkei-Turakina purchase (1849); the Te Awahou purchase (1858 and 1859); the Te Ahuaturanga or Upper Manawatū purchase (negotiated in 1858 but not completed until 1864); and – most significantly for Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata – the Rangitīkei-Manawatū purchase (1866). In each of these transactions the Māori landowners who participated in the purchase consented to transfer to the Crown the area under negotiation in return for an agreed sum of money, and the promise of reserves upon which they and their children would be able to live after the purchase had been completed.

South, and (in the case of the Manawatū-Kukutauaki 2 or Kaihinu Blocks) east, of the Manawatū River Crown purchasing of Māori land followed a somewhat different process, with ownership of large areas or 'blocks' being defined by the Native Land Court before being made available for purchase. In theory, this meant that the Court could designate as 'inalienable' areas of particular importance to Māori owners before purchase negotiations began.

This summary concentrates upon the chapters of the report that deal with the reserves created for Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata hapū and iwi as a consequence of the large Crown purchases undertaken by the colonial government to the north of the Manawatū River between 1849 and 1866. As well as examining the processes by which Crown officials

created (or failed to create) reserves from their purchases of Raukawa and Kauwhata land, and asking whether the land set apart corresponded to the needs and aspirations of the former owners, these chapters also trace what happened to the reserves after they had been created. Often insufficient and poorly-defined in the first place, and inadequately and inconsistently protected from subsequent alienation, many of the reserves set aside by the colonial authorities for members of Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata were lost from Māori ownership either in the latter decades of the nineteenth century or over the course of the twentieth. Subject to an imposed colonial land tenure system that vested land in individual owners rather than iwi or hapū communities, the reserved areas that survived as Māori land were subjected to an often-relentless process of fragmentation, through repeated partitioning, rendering them increasingly unviable as economic units and vulnerable to further alienation.

First Principles and the Rangitīkei-Turakina Purchase

The report begins by outlining the principles that were supposed to guide Crown officials when they purchased large areas of Māori land. Laid out in official instructions to government agents engaged in land purchasing, and inconsistently put into practice in land transactions over the course of the 1840s and 1850s, the principles established a standard of what might be considered 'best practice' when it came to the setting aside of reserves from Crown purchases of Māori land. This standard had four key components:

1. The land set aside had to be 'ample' and 'adequate' for the 'present' and 'future' needs of the former Māori owners.
2. The location and extent of the reserves cut out of a particular piece of land needed to be discussed and agreed to by the Māori vendors prior to purchase, not simply defined or imposed by Crown officials either before or after the fact.
3. The boundaries of the reserves had to be clearly marked and described both on paper (in the deed of sale and accompanying map or plan) and on the ground (through the erection of prominent markers, referral to important natural forms such as streams or ridgelines, the walking of boundaries, and where possible, formal survey).
4. Reserves had to be permanent and inalienable.

Completed in May 1849, Donald McLean's purchase from Ngāti Apa of the land between the Rangitīkei and Turakina Rivers conformed closely to the principles agreed by Crown officials for the creation of 'native' reserves. As such, the purchase can be referred to as a model of best practice against which subsequent purchases might be compared. In negotiating the Rangitīkei-Turakina purchase McLean met with members of Ngāti Apa on several occasions to secure agreement as to the reserves that would be set aside for them; he also made considerable efforts to ensure that, prior to the purchase, the boundaries of each reserve had been clearly defined and, where necessary, marked out on the ground. Most importantly, by establishing 'ample' reserves, both between the Turakina and Whangaehu Rivers, and around Parewanui on the Rangitīkei River, McLean ensured that the reserves set aside for the Ngāti Apa vendors were sufficiently extensive to allow the tribe a degree of continuing political autonomy as well as economic security and development. McLean also took pains to ensure that the reserved land would remain the 'permanent property' of the tribe and its 'descendants', protected from unauthorized encroachment by European settlers.

The Te Awahou Purchase Reserves

Centred around the township of Te Awahou (modern-day Foxton) on the lower Manawatū River, the Te Awahou purchase was the first significant land transaction between the Crown and Ngāti Raukawa hapū in the Porirua ki Manawatū inquiry district. The land had been offered to the Crown by the Ngāti Ngarongo chief Ihakara Tukumaru who wanted to encourage European settlement in the Manawatū. The Crown's purchase was confirmed by two deeds signed in November 1858 and May 1859.

While the first deed said nothing about where the reserves promised to the Ngāti Raukawa vendors might be located, the second deed stipulated that an area of 'more than 20 acres' was to be set aside for Ihakara Tukumaru and Kereopa Ngatahuna beside the Te Awahou township. The deed also reserved the Ngāti Whakatere burial places at Moutoa and Whakawehi, while also giving Ngāti Raukawa chiefs the right to buy back pieces of land at Te Awahou and Moutoa. Also set aside from the purchase were larger areas for the children of Thomas Uppadine Cook and Te Ākau Meretini and the missionary James Duncan. In addition, a band of 1960 acres, representing the rights of those who had not yet agreed to the

purchase, was also temporarily reserved. All but 88 acres of this area was subsequently acquired by the Crown in 1864.

Ihakara and Kereopa's reserve at Te Awahou was eventually surveyed to cover an area of 36 ½ acres. The land was subdivided into 11 lots which were divided between Ihakara, Kereopa and other eligible chiefs. Rather than being held communally, by the hapū as a whole, these lots became the property of individual chiefs. While fulfilling Ihakara's desire to be in the heart of the developing European settlement, the reserve at Te Awahou lacked direct access to the Manawatū River and was significantly smaller than the areas that had been set aside for both the children of the prominent settler Thomas Cook and James Duncan. Vested in individual owners, the 11 lots at Te Awahou were also vulnerable to subsequent alienation. Between 1864 and 1914 all but one of the 11 sections of the Awahou reserve passed either entirely or partially into European ownership. Apart from one acre gifted by Ihakara to the Crown for a courthouse, all of this land appears to have been purchased by private buyers. Today only one two-acre section of the original Awahou reserve remains as Māori land.

While allowing for Ihakara's wish to be close to the growing European settlement at the mouth of the Manawatū River, the reserves set aside by the Crown made little provision for the economic and cultural requirements of other groups with interests in the Te Awahou purchase area. Although allowing small burial reserves for Ngāti Whakatere at Moutoa and Whakawehi, the purchase made no provision for that iwi's cultivations at Iwitekai, Parikawau, Taupunga and Tahumataroa, while the site of Henere Te Herekau's recently-constructed church at Moutoa was also left unreserved.

Ngāti Whakatere would struggle for decades to obtain a secure title to their two burial reserves and the return of the site of their church. While the reserve at Moutoa was placed under community ownership 'for burial purposes' in 1890, it would take until 1934 for the Whakawehi burial ground to receive similar protection. After a long struggle Ngāti Whakatere finally secured title to the site of their church at Moutoa in 1953.

The Te Ahuaturanga or Upper Manawatū Purchase and the 'Oroua Reserve'

The 'Oroua Reserve' was excluded from the Crown's purchase of Te Ahuaturanga – Upper Manawatū at the insistence of Ngāti Kauwhata and Hoani Meihana Te Rangiotu of Rangitāne. Hoani Meihana and Te Kooro Te One (of Ngāti Kauwhata and Ngāti Wehiwehi) were determined that the land between the Oroua and Taonui rivers should be set aside permanently for Ngāti Kauwhata and Rangitāne as a reserve for their children, 'and for their children after them.' In December 1865 Te Kooro Te One emphatically told Land Purchase Commissioner Isaac Featherston that he would 'never consent' to the sale of 'the Oroua Reserve.'

Despite the clearly expressed intentions of the leading Māori owners of the land, Crown officials never considered what they referred to, first as the Oroua Block, and then as the Aorangi and Taonui-Ahuaturanga blocks to be a permanent reserve for Ngāti Kauwhata or Rangitāne. The land was never accorded any special status by the Crown or vested with any formal protections against alienation.

Like other areas of Māori land, the area between the Oroua and Taonui rivers was eventually brought under the jurisdiction of the Native Land Court. In 1873 the Native Land Court divided the Aorangi Block into three: 'Upper Aorangi' (7526 acres) was awarded to Ngāti Kauwhata; Middle Aorangi (7000 acres) to Ngāti Apa; and 'Lower Aorangi' (4923 acres) to Rangitāne. With Native land law making no provision for any form of tribal or communal title, the Native Land Court vested ownership of Upper Aorangi in 69 individuals and placed no restrictions upon the land's subsequent sale or lease.

With so many individual owners it was inevitable that Ngāti Kauwhata's land in Upper Aorangi block would be subject to further subdivision. Between 1873 and 1881 the block was divided into 57 distinct sections. Most of these sections were created in November 1881 when the Native Land Court divided the 4000 acres of Upper Aorangi 1 into 45 sections. Many of these sections were subsequently sold. No less than 30 of the 45 sections created by the Court from Upper Aorangi 1 in November 1881 had been sold by the end of the century, with all but one being purchased by private Europeans. Altogether, 4579 acres or more than

60 percent of Upper Aorangi had been permanently alienated from Ngāti Kauwhata ownership by 1900. Of these, 3533 acres were sold between December 1879 and May 1892.

The process of 'community separation through subdivision', caused in large part by the inappropriate and destructive form of individual land title imposed by the Crown through its Native land laws, continued to divide and diminish Ngāti Kauwhata's holdings in Upper Aorangi and Taonui Ahuaturanga through most of the twentieth century. The division of the tribe's remaining land into smaller and smaller individually-owned sections led in turn to further alienation. Left with fragments of land that were often too small to be economically viable, many individual owners sold their sections to neighbouring European farmers. Between October 1963 and August 1984, Pākehā farmers purchased 26 sections of Māori land within Upper Aorangi.

The fragmentation of what was left of Ngāti Kauwhata's land within Upper Aorangi and Taonui Ahuaturanga also made it vulnerable to compulsory conversion from Māori to general freehold land under Section I of the Māori Affairs Amendment Act 1967. Between May 1968 and June 1972, 10 sections of Upper Aorangi were compulsorily converted from Māori to general freehold land. Only two were subsequently restored to Māori land.

Of the original 'Oroua Reserve' sought by Te Kooro Te One and Hoani Meihana no more than fragments remain as Māori land today. Just 506½ acres of the 7526 acres awarded to Ngāti Kauwhata by the Native Land Court in 1873 as Upper Aorangi still have the status of Māori land. Most of the surviving 30 sections are small: more than half are less than four acres, while 13 of the 30 are less than one hectare (2.47 acres). Only one section, 4D, is of more than 100 acres. Within Taonui Ahuaturanga just 55 of the 993 acres awarded by the Native Land Court to Ngāti Kauwhata in 1881 remain as Māori land. Of the six surviving sections, five consist of four acres or less.

The Rangitīkei-Manawatū Purchase Reserves

Isaac Earl Featherston's 1866 purchase of Rangitīkei-Manawatū was the largest and most contentious Crown purchase of Māori land in the Porirua ki Manawatū inquiry district. Embracing an estimated 240,000 acres, the boundaries of this enormous purchase extended from the Oroua and Manawatū Rivers in the east to the Tasman Sea and Rangitīkei River in the west, from Whitireia (just above Foxton) in the south to Āpiti in the north.

Even by the standards of the time, Featherston's purchase was deeply flawed. The transaction was completed despite the expressed opposition of many of those within Ngāti Raukawa who claimed interests in the land. Particularly serious was the continued resistance to the purchase from those hapū and iwi who were living upon the land: Ngāti Pare, Ngāti Turanga, and Ngāti Rākau at Hīmatangi; Ngāti Kauwhata and Ngāti Wehiwehi along the Oroua River; and Ngāti Kahoro, Ngāti Parewahawaha, Ngāti Pikiahu, Ngāti Waewae, Ngāti Rangatahi and Ngāti Matakore beside the Rangitīkei.

Having failed to secure the consent of all of those with interests in Rangitīkei-Manawatū prior to the Crown purchase, Featherston also neglected to designate any reserves: either for those who had agreed to the transaction or on behalf of those who remained opposed. Unlike in earlier Crown transactions, no reserves were either agreed or defined before Featherston's purchase of Rangitīkei-Manawatū. No reserves were marked out on the ground, and there was no mention of reserves in the deed of purchase. Instead, Featherston assumed complete control over the process. The 'extent and position' of the Rangitīkei-Manawatū reserves were 'left entirely' to his 'discretion', to be defined only after the entire block had been 'ceded to the Crown.'

When they were eventually defined, the reserves set apart for those from Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata who had agreed to the purchase were the bare minimum Featherston could have provided. Despite having promised to provide reserves that were 'suitable and ample', and included all 'existing settlements', Featherston initially allowed just 500 acres in reserves for those affiliated with Ngāti Raukawa who had signed the deed of purchase. This included 300 acres for Tapa Te Whata and Ngāti Kauwhata, and a total of 200 acres for Ngāti Parewahawaha and Ngāti Kahoro at Maramaihoea, Matahiwi and Ōhinepuhiawe. After survey and the addition of 50 acres at Tāwhirihoe for Ihakara and Kereopa Tukumaru, the

total area of Featherston's reserves for those from Ngāti Kauwhata and the other Ngāti Raukawa groups who had agreed to his purchase increased to 647 acres.

As well as being manifestly inadequate, and much less than those who had agreed to the purchase had expected, the reserves allowed for Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata were substantially smaller than those Featherston had granted to Rangitāne and Ngāti Apa. Matters were further aggravated by the fact that the reserves created for Rangitāne and Ngāti Apa had been located on land that was also claimed – and in the case of Puketōtara and Pakapakatea – actually inhabited by those who continued to oppose the purchase of Rangitīkei-Manawatū.

Rather than accepting Featherston's promise of a reserve based on 'the extent' to which their 'claims' were 'admitted' by those who had agreed to the purchase, those from Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata who had opposed the Crown's acquisition of Rangitīkei-Manawatū insisted on having their claims heard by the Native Land Court. The first of the non-sellers' claims – by Parakaia Te Pouepa on behalf of Ngāti Turanga, Ngāti Te Au and Ngāti Rākau to Hīmatangi – was heard by the Native Land Court at Ōtaki in March 1868. All of the other claims, including those on behalf of Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Wehiwehi, Ngāti Parewahawaha and Ngāti Pikiahu, were deferred until July of the following year when they were brought before a special sitting of the Native Land Court presided over by Chief Judge Francis Dart Fenton and Frederick Edward Maning in Wellington. As had been the case at Ōtaki, the non-sellers' claims were actively opposed by the Crown.

In an initial judgment dated 23 August 1869 the two judges ruled that only 'three hapus of Raukawa' – Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Kahoro and Ngāti Parewahawaha – had ownership rights to the Rangitīkei-Manawatū block outside of Himatangi. The claims of all of the other groups affiliated with Ngāti Raukawa – including the four hapū at Te Reureu – were dismissed. Altogether, the Court identified just 62 men, women and children as having unsold rights to the Rangitīkei-Manawatū purchase area. This included 41 from Ngāti Kauwhata, 20 from Ngāti Kahoro and Ngāti Parewahawaha, and one (Wiriharai Te Angiangi) of Ngāti Wehiwehi.

Rather than following the advice of the Chief Judge and allowing the successful claimants to arrange between themselves and their Ngāti Apa neighbours the area to be set aside by the Court, Featherston rushed to the Manawatū to organize his own settlement. Bypassing the

leading non-sellers of Ngāti Kauwhata, and ignoring the opposition of the non-sellers of Ngāti Parewahawaha and Ngāti Kahoro, Featherston presented to the Court a settlement that would limit the land awarded to the successful claimants to a total of 6200 acres. Sitting at short notice, on 25 September 1869 Judge Maning confirmed the arrangement. Two days later, Featherston applied to the Colonial Government for a formal proclamation declaring Native title – and the non-sellers' remaining claims – to be definitively extinguished. The proclamation was duly issued on 16 October 1869.

Outraged at Featherston's short-circuiting of the Court's process, and the arbitrary awards they were presented with, the non-sellers responded by disrupting the Provincial Government's survey of the Rangitīkei-Manawatū purchase area. They were joined by the people of Te Reureu who, in April and May 1870, broke up the survey of land within their boundaries. Further disruptions were recorded across Rangitīkei-Manawatū, including the destruction of trigonometrical stations necessary for the subdivision of the land for European settlement.

In order to bring an end to these disruptions, Native and Defence Minister Donald McLean in November 1870 created a limited number of additional reserves to supplement those that had already been granted by Featherston and the Native Land Court. As a 'final settlement of all' of their claims McLean provided the Ngāti Kauwhata non-sellers with 1500 acres (500 of which was to be sold to cover the debts they had incurred pursuing their case), as well as two small eel fishing reserves. The non-sellers of Ngāti Parewahawaha and Ngāti Kahoro received 1000 acres. McLean also provided an additional 500 acres to the portion of Ngāti Kauwhata that had agreed to the Crown's purchase, and slightly more than 600 acres to those from Ngāti Parewahawaha and Ngāti Kahoro who had signed the Rangitīkei Manawatū deed of purchase.

The largest reserve McLean made was for Ngāti Pikiahu, Ngāti Waewae, Ngāti Maniapoto and Ngāti Rangatahi at Te Reureu. Although larger than the other reserves created by the Native Minister, the Reureu reserve was much less than the four hapū had sought. Restricting the reserve to a narrow strip between the Rangitīkei River and the first ridge inland, McLean initially allowed an area of approximately 3400 acres. When McLean's assistant Henry Tacy Kemp – after meeting with the Reureu people and walking the boundary – extended the area of the reserve to an estimated 6400 acres, the Native Minister insisted that it be reduced back

to 4400 acres. This was despite Kemp's advice that the 'considerable body of Natives' living at Te Reureu needed additional land for their livestock, and warnings from the Reureu people themselves that the western part of the reserve was being eroded away by the Rangitīkei River.

Including several supplementary awards made by Kemp after McLean had left the district, the total surveyed area of the 'additional' reserves allowed by the Native Minister was 14,316½ acres. Of this 10,448½ acres were granted to iwi, hapū, whānau or individuals associated with Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Kauwhata. Altogether, the Ngāti Raukawa-affiliated iwi and hapū of Rangitīkei-Manawatū (sellers and non-sellers together) received just under 18,000 acres of reserves from the colonial government and Native Land Court. This was less than nine percent of the Rangitīkei-Manawatū purchase area (excluding Hīmatangi).

Having accepted from the Native Minister very much less than they had claimed, Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Parewahawaha and the other Raukawa-affiliated groups expected to quickly receive legal title to their reserves. The necessary Crown grants, however, were to prove a long time coming. Delays, first in the survey of the reserves, and then in passing the necessary legislation, meant that the first Crown grants were not issued until January 1874. For the predominantly Ngāti Parewahawaha and Ngāti Kahoro owners of the reserves at Maramaihoea, Matahiwi, Ōhinepuhiawe and Poutū, as well as the people of Te Reureu, the wait was to prove much longer. Due in part to the failure of McLean and Kemp to clearly stipulate who the reserves were for, as well as the legal requirement that the name of every individual owner be included on the memorial of title, Crown officials were often unable to identify exactly whose names should be included on Crown grants for tribal, hapū, or sometimes even whānau reserves. In May 1882 the Governor was obliged to appoint a royal commission under Alexander Mackay to ascertain the ownership of 21 Rangitīkei-Manawatū reserves, including 14 which had been granted to iwi, hapū or whānau connected to Ngāti Raukawa. Crown grants for the reserves at Maramaihoea, Matahiwi, Ōhinepuhiawe and Poutū were eventually issued in September 1887. The Te Reureu people had to wait longer still. They did not receive legal title to their land until December 1896.

The Fate of the Rangitīkei-Manawatū Reserves, 1874-2018

As we have seen, government best practice required that the reserves set aside for Māori from Crown purchases must not only be 'sufficient' for the owners' present and future needs, but also permanent. The reserves defined by Crown officials and the Native Land Court in the aftermath of the Rangitīkei-Manawatū purchase proved to be neither. Of the approximately 18,000 acres set aside for Ngāti Kauwhata and the other Ngāti Raukawa affiliated hapū of Rangitīkei-Manawatū, something like 7000 were permanently alienated before the end of the nineteenth century. According to available records a further 2091 acres were acquired by private European purchasers between 1900 and 1930.

Particularly distressing was the Ngāti Kauwhata community's loss by 1900 of three quarters of its land at Te Awahuri, and all of its 1035-acre reserve at Kawakawa. From 1874 most of Ngāti Kauwhata's remaining land within Rangitīkei-Manawatū had been concentrated in these two relatively large reserves. The largest and most important of the two was the 4500-acre reserve at Te Awahuri, which had been awarded by the Native Land Court in 1869 to those who had opposed Featherston's purchase. After their agent and advocate Alexander McDonald was sent to prison in 1874, the six legal owners of Te Awahuri Reserve gifted 850 acres to McDonald's wife Annie. The Te Awahuri grantees also mortgaged part of their remaining land to raise £960 to support McDonald's family while he was imprisoned. After he was released from prison McDonald persuaded the grantees to take out a second mortgage of £1040 on their remaining land in order to raise money to purchase stock and clear and fence their land.

In January 1880 McDonald acquired both of the mortgages on the Te Awahuri Reserve. Having fallen out with the land's legal owners over the subdivision of the reserve's remaining 3650 acres, McDonald foreclosed on the mortgages and had the land put up for sale. Thanks to another mortgage raised on the land, and apparently without the knowledge of his Ngāti Kauwhata clients, McDonald purchased the 3650 acres. By the time the community at Te Awahuri was made aware of this transaction McDonald had sold 1700 of the 3650 acres, as well as all of the 850 acres that had been gifted to his wife in 1874.

With what was left of the Te Awahuri Reserve heavily mortgaged by McDonald, the Ngāti Kauwhata non-sellers were obliged to alienate their 1035-acre reserve at Kawakawa in order to buy back 1523 acres of their land at Te Awahuri. Repurchased on the condition that the land would be permanently restricted from further sale, the recovered portion of the Te Awahuri reserve (which ended up being no more than 1192 acres) was divided by the Native Land Court into 24 sections in October 1891

Despite the legal restriction on their subsequent sale, the 24 sections at Te Awahuri were almost immediately targeted by private European land purchasers. Between 1898 and 1907 government officials allowed the alienation of four of the 24 sections (128 acres), while all or part of a further six sections (204 acres) were purchased by private Europeans between 1912 and 1923 (after the Native Land Act 1909 had removed all remaining restrictions on the purchase of land within the Te Awahuri Reserve).

Of the 24 sections of the repurchased Te Awahuri Reserve for which Crown grants were issued in October 1891 parts of only six remain as Māori land today. Just two of the 24 have more than half of their original areas still intact. Altogether, only 110 of the Te Awahuri Reserve's original 4500 acres are still Māori land today.

Even when the owners of reserves within Rangitīkei-Manawatū were able to avoid the wholesale alienation of their remaining land they often struggled to put it to productive and profitable use. The legal requirement that 'native' land be vested in individual shareholders, rather than held communally by hapū and iwi, led to disagreements within communities over who exactly the eligible individual owners were and which pieces of land they were entitled to. In the case of the Ōhinepuhiawe and Te Reureu reserves these disputes continued well into the twentieth century. Disagreement over which individuals had ownership rights to the Reureu Reserve, and in what proportion, led to more than half a century of royal commissions (1884); Native Land Court and Native Appellate Court investigations and inquiries (1895, 1896, 1912, 1924, 1928 and 1934); petitions to Parliament (in 1899 (two), 1902 (three), 1903 (two), 1905, 1910 (two), 1913, 1917, 1924, 1928, 1929, 1932, 1935, and 1937 (two)); and correspondence with the Minister and Department of Native Affairs. Through this long period the exact ownership of much of the Reureu reserve remained unresolved, and subject to ongoing claims and contention.

The Crown-imposed system of native land tenure also led to the fragmentation of areas of land that had previously been held as communal assets. The initial subdivisions of Reureu 1, 2 and 3 into 54 sections, for example, was followed by further partitions as individuals and families of owners sought to have their interests geographically defined and set apart from other shareholders. By 7 January 1925, the original Reureu Reserve had been divided into 97 distinct sections of land. Further partitioning in the quarter century after 1940 led to the creation of more than 50 new subsections within Reureu 1, 2 and 3.

The progressive division of the Reureu Reserve into smaller, often economically unviable units, made it increasingly difficult for owners to make a living off their land. Even in larger subsections, the growing number of individual owners in each piece rendered it impossible for everyone to remain living on the land. In such cases, owners often opted to lease out their land, rather than attempting to farm it themselves.

The efforts of the Te Reureu people to make a living off their land was further frustrated by difficulties obtaining essential infrastructure such as reliable road access to their land. Road access remained a problem for Te Reureu farmers until the end of the 1930s, with the local council refusing to provide a connection between Onepuehu and Kākāriki until the route was finally completed as a relief project during the Great Depression.

Problems with access also bedevilled the owners of the Kōpūtara Reserve. Having not received legal title to their land until April 1964, the Kōpūtara owners spent the next half century attempting to obtain access to their landlocked reserve. Legal access to Kōpūtara had been cut off at the end of the nineteenth century, when the Crown had issued grants to the surrounding land without making provision for a right of way across the privately-owned land to the landlocked reserve. Despite securing the right to apply to the High Court for access through an amendment to the Property Law Act in 1975, the Kōpūtara Trustees did not secure legal access to their land until 2000. Practical access to the Kōpūtara Reserve was delayed for a further decade and a half as the trustees struggled to construct a right of way in the face of practical difficulties and obstruction on the part of the European landowner.

Today 3702, or one fifth, of the approximately 18,000 acres set aside within Rangitīkei-Manawatū for Ngāti Kauwhata and the other hapū and iwi affiliated with Ngāti Raukawa remains as Māori land. Of these 3702 acres, 2474, or two-thirds, are located within the Reureu

Reserve. In contrast, just 168 of the 6585 acres reserved for Ngāti Kauwhata in and around Te Awahuri (including Kawakawa) are still Māori land today.

Most of the Rangitīkei-Manawatū reserve land retained today under Māori tenure is either fragmented or isolated. The 2474 acres remaining within the Reureu reserve are divided into 97 sections with hundreds of individual owners. The 105 acres of Māori land at Ōhinepuhiawe are split into 14 separate sections, while the surviving 168 acres at Te Awahuri are divided into 20 portions. Apart from the 50-acre reserve at Matahiwi, which is now bisected by the Rangitīkei River, the only area to remain entirely intact since the nineteenth century is the landlocked reserve at Kōpūtara.