

Justice delayed on reo beatings claim



A Waatea News article dated 9 July stated that the “Waitangi Tribunal has turned down a request by former Labour cabinet minister Dover Samuels for an early report on his claim over children being punished for speaking te reo Māori at school. The claim is part of the Te Papanahi o Te Raki inquiry into Northland claims.

Mr Samuels says the Crown through its teaching cadre operated a sustained, widespread and prolonged implementation of brutalisation of small children for speaking the taonga of their language. He says the Crown's existing apology is deficient as it only alleges its fault was not actively supporting te reo in the school, rather than what was in fact an active policy of suppression.

Many of the people who would have suffered from the punishment claimed are now well over 60 at least and so would benefit from an early report in view of their likely life expectancy.

He wants a full Crown apology read by the Governor General at Parliament to surviving victims and for this apology to be incorporated in the preamble of the Education Act 1989. He also wants a national hui of apology for victims of the process and their children; And a Kaumatua Kuia Teaching Trust funded by the Crown to fund specialised one on one or small group Te Reo training to Māori who have been subject of institutional abuse, with priority to Māori over 50 years of age.”

In the Ngāti Raukawa oral and traditional history report, He Iti Nā Motai, many of the hapū include examples of Crown policy, process and behaviour that saw the almost total loss of te reo across the Iwi. In 1975, it was reported that the Iwi had no-one under the age of 30 who could speak te reo and only a handful of elders who could.

As a consequence, the Raukawa Marae Trustees supported the Whakatupuranga Rua Mano initiative shaped by Whatarangī Winiata. Over 25 years, 80 hui and noho were held across the ART

Confederation to revive the language. The initiative was the precursor to the establishment of Te Wānanga o Raukawa in 1981.

Not surprisingly, the newly amended Statement of Claim for the Ngāti Raukawa Wai-113 iwi wide claim states that the Crown “sought to undermine and suppress te reo, ngā tikanga me te mātauranga o Ngāti Raukawa, which are an intrinsic part of the expression of te mana me te tino rangatiratanga of Ngāti Raukawa.”

We can look forward to seeing that evidence presented to the Waitangi Tribunal in February 2020.

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